RĀMĀNUJA AND BOWNE

RĀMĀNUJA AND BOWNE

A Study in Comparative Philosophy

By

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Dedicated to

Dr. S Radhakrishnan,

The President of India

and

the Fountainhead

of Contemporary

Philosophical Reflection

FOREWORD

Dr. Lazarus attempts in this book a comparative study of the systems of Rāmānuja (11th Century) and Bowne (19th Century). The backgrounds of the two thinkers are different. Their ages are different. And yet the main problem of philosophy which they consider is more or less the same. Their systems are regarded by the author as two variants of what is called "personal idealism". He admits that "Rāmānuja's conception of reality in general and of the self in particular differs greatly from Bowne's conception of them."

I do not think that Bowne occupies the same place in American philosophical thought as Rāmānuja does in the Indian tradition.

There is an elaborate account of the relation of Rāmānuja's thought to the Jaina, Sānkhya and Yoga systems as well as the Advaita Vedānta of Śankara. Bowne's relation to Leibniz, Berkeley, Kant, Hegel, Herbart and Lotze are described briefly. Bowne himself tells us that his conclusions "are essentially those of Lotze. I have reached them, for the most part, by strictly independent research; but so far as their character is concerned there would be no great misrepresentation in calling them Lotzean" (pages 44-45).

The book is valuable for the reason that it brings out the great role played by the theist tradition in Indian thought. The general impression that almost all systems of Indian thought adopt the non-dualistic (advaita) standpoint and look upon the world as less than real is corrected by the account here. Both the systems of Rāmānuja and Bowne are protests against the theories of the absolute as abstract and undifferentiated. They lay stress on the reality of God as self-conscious active spirit, the world and the selves.

The author's work is erudite and shows a capacity to deal competently with metaphysical problems.

S. RADHAKRISHNAN

PREFACE

Amidst the prevailing trend of logical analysis in Philosophy, any attempt to compare philosophers of the idealistic strain would be considered anomalous if not absurd. And yet the fact remains that men and women of all time have been influenced in their lives by some dominating ideology. In the process of man's daring attempt to reshape and refine his environment and indeed the world, ideas and convictions have played no small part. It is this realisation that has prompted me to take up this work at a time when it is least popular to do so.

Sporadic references have been made by several able men in the field of philosophy in India, to similarities existing between the thought of Western philosophers and those of the East. Pioneering work in this direction has been attempted by no less important a person than Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, who has sedulously upheld the idealistic trend of thinking in the East and in the West. But no systematic work of comparing two philosophers belonging to the two hemispheres has ever been produced prior to this work.

In this book I have merely attempted to juxtapose the similarities noticed in the thought of Rāmānuja and Bowne. Although a few conclusions have been drawn, yet for the major part, I have left it to the reader to draw his own inferences. My restraint in this regard has been largely prompted by the desire to remain dispassionate in spite of the fact that there is a common tendency to be biased one way or the other. It was hard to avoid the temptation of looking at philosophers from the point of view of their prestige in their respective climes. However, a serious and genuine attempt has been made to bring their ideas together for critical analysis. No less important is the underlying motive of improving the knowledge and understanding of the thought of the countries represented by the two philosophers The ideas which permeate the

life of nations, if understood, could become an enduring basis on which they could come together.

I acknowledge with deepest gratitude the institutions and persons who have, in different ways, helped me to complete my studies in the United States. I am grateful to Boston University Graduate School and the Department of Philosophy for making it possible for me to undergo training at the University. The kindly co-operation extended to me by Dean Muelder and the Teaching Assistantship in the Department have been invaluable aids in maintaining myself at the University. To my major Professor Peter A. Bertocci and to Professor R. M. Millard, chairman of the Department, I am indebted for their valuable advice, for critically going through the manuscripts and for suggesting many alterations and corrections. My sincere thanks are due to Mr. William Stanley Parker, whom I came to know towards the latter part of my stay at Boston and who was largely responsible for making ample financial provision for the completion of this work.

My indebtedness to Professor Roberts of Harvard is great. From him I have learnt much. His friendship was a source of encouragement in continuing the work at moments of discouragement and despondency.

Throughout my stay in the United States, I have been helped by many friends. It is impossible to mention all of them here. However, I cannot help mentioning the names of Professor J. H. Lavely, Professor M. S. Pitt, Rev. W. Rollins, Rev. Lutz and Mrs. R. M. Garrett.

Miss J. P. Kapadia has been kind enough to go through all the Sanskrit translations and to suggest alterations wherever needed. Mr. R. N. Maurya and Mr. R. N Upadhyaya have helped me with reading the proofs of the earlier chapters.

I owe a very special debt of gratitude to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of the Indian Republic, who is univer-

sally *acknowledged as the doyen of present-day* philosophers. It was indeed extremely gracious of him to have found time to peruse my work, in spite of his onerous official duties and the variety of his preoccupations. His foreword to this book is in the nature of a blessing, which I *will always* cherish with deep respect.

This book would not have seen the light of day, but for the kind interest shown by Mr. Sudhakar Dikshit, the Managing Director of Chetana Ltd., Publishers and International book-sellers. Mr. *Dikshit is a keen student* of philosophy and has been editing, *Chetana*, a philosophical monthly, since its inception. His undertaking to publish the work is a token of goodwill and friendship.

Bombay F. K. LAZARUS
17th October 1962.

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INTRODUCTION

This work is undertaken in the belief, which is shared with other students of Indian Philosophy at the present time, that the study of Western Philosophy provides at least an interesting and possibly a fruitful basis for the evaluation of Indian thought. Further, the ultimate justification of such a comparison as is pursued here, is that it may contribute to the general philosophical enterprise, which knows no boundaries of race or clime, of achieving greater insight into reality.

Any comparison between two philosophers is bound to be hazardous, especially when they are philosophers as far apart in time and cultural setting as Rāmānuja and Bowne. Yet, with the pitfalls in mind, this book undertakes to juxtapose the philosophies of these thinkers, divergent as their idioms are, in order to bring out as far as possible the points at which they meet. Both thinkers may be called idealists and, more than that, personal idealists. Indeed it is this resemblance which provides the ground for a meaningful comparison between their systems of thought. Having said this, however, it is necessary to emphasize, as is done throughout this study, that Rāmānuja's conception of reality in general and of the self in particular differs greatly from Bowne's conception of them. Hence throughout this work while every effort is made to bring similarities to light, differences are not overlooked, especially those pertaining to the two philosophers' views on the nature of consciousness and of the self. If we may sum up these differences in a few words here, they are that, rather surprisingly, Rāmānuja assigns a more important role to matter than does Bowne. At the same time that matter is for Rāmānuja the source of finitude and evil, it is also, as in Western Philosophical tradition, an individuating principle. Differences apart, however, the important thing for us is that our thinkers move in comparable universes of discourse. For example, Rāmānuja of Perumbudūr in the eleventh century says:

> It has been previously stated that the *Vedāntas* establish the *Brahman*, as the sole cause of the entire universe. He alone is the efficient cause of the entire universe. At the same time He is in the form of the universe, as He is its material cause also . . . . He is the highest object of human pursuit; because His essential characteristic constitutes the unsurpassable bliss . . . the *Prakriti* and the individual selves are not fit to be mentioned as the cause of the world. The *Vedāntas* teach about the *Brahman* only who is omniscient, who possesses a true will, who is hostile to all evils such as ignorance, etc, and who is the ocean of innumerable noble qualities.[1]

And in the twentieth century, Bowne in a vein not too remote from this, writes:

> The infinite is not a passive substance, but the basal cause of the universe. As such, it is one and indivisible, and is forever equal to itself. Of the finite, two conceptions are logically possible. We may view it merely as a form of energizing on the part of the infinite; so that it has a purely phenomenal existence or we may view it as a substantial creation by the infinite. But in no case is it possible to identify the finite with the infinite, either totally or partially.[2]

Accordingly this study will try to show by means of detailed comparison of the method, epistemology and metaphysics of these two philosophers that they stand upon common ground, raising the same questions and when all allowances are made for differences of time, place and philosophic idiom, coming to somewhat similar conclusions. We begin with a chapter designed to place Rāmānuja and Bowne, in their respective philosophic traditions.

Until very recently Indian Philosophy has been so impregnated with religious thought that it is no easy task to isolate the strictly philosophic ideas in the works of Rāmānuja. Moreover, there is the danger of distortion in

1. V. Krishnamacharya, ed *Vedāntasāra*, tr by N. B. Iyyangar, (Madras The Adyar Library, 1953), pp. 23-24
2. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, (rev. ed, New York: American Book Company, 1898), pp. 98-99

thus separating ideas from their setting. But the operation is not without its advantages, for it enables us to see how well these ideas stand the test of philosophical analysis and criticism. It is an aid in the evaluation of Indian Metaphysics. Further, although the Sanskrit writings of Rāmānuja are available, his Tamil works have not yet been identified. The Sanskrit works themselves are not clearly dated and so it is difficult to trace the development of his thought. Neither of these difficulties exist in the case of Bowne, all of whose works are extant and dated.

All of Rāmānuja's works in Sanskrit have been translated into English. Both the translations and the original Sanskrit have been used in the preparation of this work, together with commentaries. The latter are used with great caution, for each of Rāmānuja's commentators has his particular bias. While studies about Bowne have also been used, it has always been with an eye upon his writings themselves.

So far as I know the present work is the first to undertake a comparison of Rāmānuja and Bowne. The comparative study of Eastern and Western thought is making headway in India, although slowly. Although a number of Indian scholars have attempted to compare Eastern and Western Idealism, yet even such a comprehensive work as P. T. Raju's *Idealistic Thought of India,* makes no mention of Bowne. The American thinker has been the subject of much study and controversy in his own country where his influence has been considerable, so that a comparison of his thought with that of an Indian philosopher of similar strain may contribute in a small way to the mutual understanding of East and West

Our comparison of Rāmānuja and Bowne is oriented towards the personalistic strain of thought evident in the philosophies of both thinkers. We begin with an introductory chapter designed to place the two philosophers in their respective historical contexts and to bring out the point that the elements in the thought of their predecessors of

which they especially availed themselves were of a personalistic character. From thence we proceed to a comparative study of the methodologies of Rāmānuja and Bowne and of the closely allied subject of their theories of truth. Here we are concerned to emphasize the synoptic nature of their approach to the problems of philosophy and the consequent preoccupation of both thinkers with exuerience as a whole. The result of this preoccupation, as we try to show, is that while both thinkers are ever heedful of the deliverances of experience, they do not for a moment neglect the role of reason in experience. Not reason *versus* experience, but reason and experience, is their guiding principle. We proceed next to juxtapose the epistemologies of the two philosophers and to show that neither thinker is disposed to view the theory of knowledge apart from its wider setting in a theory of being. The result is that neither thinker gets lost in the mere technicalities of epistemological discussion. Their aim always is to relate knowledge to life and practice. Next follows the chapter, which is central, on the metaphysics of Rāmānuja and Bowne, wherein we discover that for both thinkers reality is nothing if not concrete. Above all it is personalistic, though the ways in which our two thinkers arrive at this conclusion are not always the same. Finally, in the last chapter we undertake to point out some of the weaknesses in the views of Rāmānuja and Bowne, and to link these with the general character of Eastern and Western thought Throughout our comparison of Rāmānuja and Bowne attempt has been made to constantly bear in mind their systems of thought as a whole. It is in this light that we shall try to evaluate the similarities and differences between them. Needless to say we have depended upon proof texts in making our points, at the same time that we have selected these so as to illustrate the thought of their authors in its totality.

THE AUTHOR

CHAPTER I

RĀMĀNUJA AND BOWNE IN THEIR HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

No philosophy springs full fledged from the mind of its creator, in a word, no philosophy is without a pedigree. Whether it be in the East or the West, philosophies have arisen in the attempt to answer certain questions, and these questions as well as the answers given to them, have a history. Hence the object of the present chapter is to view Rāmānuja and Bowne in relation to their predecessors. In this way the problems with which each deals are best defined and comparison between them best launched. More space is devoted to Rāmānuja than to Bowne, for the Indian thinker is comparatively unknown to English readers. Furthermore his sources are far more extensive than those of Bowne.

RĀMĀNUJA'S IMPORTANCE IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

After Śaṅkara, the name that stands out most prominently among Indian philosophers, is that of Rāmānuja. Over against the unreality of the world and the "bloodless absolute"[1] of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja is concerned to prove the reality of this world with God as its Creator. He believes that unless the reality of the individual selves and of the external world are affirmed, all of our experience remains meaningless. For if the world and the individual are unreal, so likewise must the experience of them be. To Rāmānuja, then, Brahman is personal and the creator of persons, all of whom in consequence have an equality of status, not only metaphysically but also as a group.[2] Such

1. S. Radhakrishnan, *Vedanta according to Sankara and Rāmānuja*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1929), p. 225.
2. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, (London: G. Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1929), Vol. II, p. 661.

a view obviously cuts across the inequalities based on caste and race. All are creatures of the same eternal Brahman.

Rāmānuja rejects the mechanical repetition of the formula "I am Brahman"[3] and this because it contributes nothing to the individual's understanding of God or to the establishment of any relationship with him. In Rāmānuja's system not only is the activity emphasized, but also the function of the will. Accordingly stress is laid upon the freedom of the individual. Furthermore, salvation for Rāmānuja is not absorption into the absolute but fellowship with him.[4] Many other points of difference will be made clear in our discussion on Rāmānuja's relation to the principal systems of idealistic thought in India. But before we go on to trace Rāmānuja's relation to other Indian systems of idealistic thought, it may be helpful to say something about idealism in general.

DEFINITION OF IDEALISM

Although idealism has acquired a wide variety of senses, yet these have revolved around a common core of meaning. The term has been used to denote all those philosophies which maintain that spiritual values have a determining voice in the universe.[5] Dr. Ewing objects to this definition because it implies that all believers in God are idealists.[6] He further points out that all philosophers who call themselves idealists have in common the view that there can be no physical objects existing apart from some experience. He believes that this can be taken as a definition provided we consider thinking as a part of experience and that we do not consider passivity as implying experience, and provided that we include under experience "Absolute Expe-

3. S. N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1951), Vol. I, p. 477.
4 S Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 662.
5. Norman K. Smith, *Prolegomena to an Idealist Theory of Knowledge*, (London: Macmillan and Co, Ltd., 1924), p. 1.
6 A C Ewing, *Idealism. A Critical Survey*, (London: Mathuen & Co, Ltd, 1934), p 5

rience" or the experience of God.[7] In line with this, Professor Cunningham writes:

> Idealism is that philosophical doctrine which undertakes to show that, in order to think matter or the spatio-temporal order of events in its ultimate nature, *we are logically compelled to think mind* or spirit along with it as in some sense foundational to it.[8]

And Professor Hocking defines idealism as "The philosophy which holds that reality is of the nature of mind."[9] Clifford Barrett strikes another note. To him idealism is a theory of reality which accepts the cosmic significance of value, coherence and systematic completeness.[10] But Hegel takes the position that every philosophy is idealistic, arguing that the ideality of the finite is the chief maxim of philosophy; and for that reason every genuine philosophy is idealism. He says:

> The proposition that the finite is of ideal nature constitutes idealism. In philosophy idealism consists of nothing else than the recognition that the finite has no veritable being. Essentially every philosophy is idealism, or at least has idealism for its principle, and the question then is only how far it is actually carried through. This is true of philosophy as of religion, for religion equally with philosophy refuses to recognize in finitude a veritable being, or something ultimate and absolute, or non-posited, uncreated, and eternal.[11]

Underlying these definitions and others that might be cited is the view that idealism is a search for an all-com-

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7. A. C. Ewing, *Idealism: A Critical Survey*, p. 337.

8. Gustavus Watts Cunningham, *The Idealistic Argument in Recent British and American Philosophy*. (New York: The Century Co., 1933), p. 339.

9. W. E. Hocking, *Types of Philosophy*, (New York: C. Scribner's & Sons, 1929), p. 247.

10. Clifford Barrett, "ed," *Contemporary Idealism in America*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932), p. 21. c. f. "Journal Johnston and L. G. Struthers, (London: George Allen & Unwin,

11. W. G. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, "translated by" W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers, (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1929, 1951), Vol. I, p. 168.

prehensive reality, in which the difference between mind and matter is removed. Such a unity is considered as the Infinite, and even that form of idealism called spiritual pluralism or personal idealism attempts to relate all things to it. The absolute is considered as an organic unity of persons, each person having a noumenal status. It is to this view that the philosophy of Rāmānuja conforms. Rāmānuja's thought however, is not entirely divorced from other systems of Indian thought whether they be idealistic or realistic. We shall now attempt to discover how Rāmānuja's thought is related to other Indian philosophical theories.

RĀMĀNUJA'S RELATION TO THE JAINA SYSTEM

Somewhat in the fashion of Bowne and Rāmānuja, the Jainas affirm that reality is not one, but a complex system. They contended that reality cannot be understood from just one point of view but must be looked at from various angles, if its nature is to be understood.[12] A particular way of looking at reality may serve of course a specific purpose, yet to the exclusion of other points of view such narrowness can only result in a partial and incomplete view of reality.

According to the Jaina view, reality is best described as "permanence in the midst of change, identity in the midst of diversity and unity in the midst of multiplicity."[13] Appearance, disappearance and permanence, are the three outstanding features of reality. Without an underlying unity, the Jainas believe, growth and development are unintelligible. Objects in concrete experience exhibit the threefold nature of affirmation, negation, and comprehending unity, somewhat in the fashion of the Hegelian dialectical principle of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. The Jainas call this underlying unity in the midst of change *dravya* or substance. Substance is defined as that which

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12 S Radhakrishnan, "ed", *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western*, (London; George Allen & Unwin, Ltd, 1952), p. 139.

13 *Ibid*, p 140

possesses qualities and modes, so that the latter are inseparable from the substance to which they belong. Further, it is stated that there can be no substance apart from its qualities.[14] They hold that substance, apart from its qualities, and qualities, apart from substance, are mere intellectual abstractions.

This idea leads to the logical crux of Jaina philosophy, namely, the theory of *asti-nāsti-vāda*, according to which two contradictory propositions can intelligibly be related to the same thing. It is possible to affirm of the same thing that "it is" and "is not" at the same time. What Jaina thinkers mean by this is that you can describe an object as existing from one point of view and as not existing from another. Thus two propositions, one affirmative and the other negative, are significantly asserted of the same object, and both propositions are valid. This point is dealt with *in detail by Jaina thinkers with regard to what is singled* out by them as the four aspects of a thing, its substance, place, time, and form. From the point of view of substance a thing is in respect to its own substance and is not with respect to other substances. A piece of furniture may exist or is jungle wood and it may not exist or is not rose wood. In respect to place, a thing exists or is in its own place and is not in any other place. The tiger in the cage is in the cage and is not in the woods. With respect to time also, a thing *is in its own time and is not in another time. Buddha* existed before Christ and was not after Christ. Similarly with regard to form. Water as a solid exists below freezing point and does not exist then as a liquid.[15]

For the Jaina thinkers, as for Rāmānuja after them, the world consists of two classes of objects, namely, conscious objects and non-conscious objects. Conscious objects are living beings and non-conscious objects are matter. So reality consists of conscious selves and non-conscious

14. S. Radhakrishnan, "ed.," *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western*, pp. 142-143.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 141

matter. The relationship between conscious selves and matter is explained by a theory of psycho-physical parallelism. The mind parallels changes in matter and matter parallels changes in the mind, though there is no direct interaction between the two. But the Jainas are quick to point out that the mind-body relation (if it can be called a relation) is confined to the physical world.[16] The conscious self is constantly striving to rise above this relation. When the mind reaches the stage of absolute consciousness of itself, the stage associated with infinite knowledge, infinite power, and infinite bliss, it exists in a state of perfection.

Another point of contact between the Jainas and Rāmānuja is the theory of Karma. Owing to their peculiar psychic disposition, individual selves become attached to matter, from which however they struggle to free themselves, so that they can exist in a state of pure consciousness. For both Jaina philosophy and Rāmānuja, this state is achievable by means of that discipline of mind and body known as Yoga. By the practice of Yoga the individual self becomes progressively purer until it reaches a stage of spiritual perfection, the underlying presupposition being that the soul is born and reborn until it reaches such perfection.[17] Souls have to be born as human beings in order to attain perfection, since human beings alone are capable of performing Yoga. So in Rāmānuja's philosophy, as in the Jaina System of Thought, reality consists of a plurality of individual selves which exist in a state of perfection. These selves together form a system and serve as ideals to which less perfect selves aspire.

RĀMĀNUJA'S RELATION TO CERTAIN BUDDHISTIC SCHOOLS

Among the many schools of Buddhistic philosophy, the one with which Rāmānuja's affiliations are closest, is the

16 S Radhakrishnan, "ed", *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western*, p 143

17 S N Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosphy*, (London: ambridge University Press, 1951), pp 199 200

Yogāchāra School of Subjective Idealism. For this school, as for Bowne and Rāmājuna, ultimate reality is of the nature of consciousness or mind. External objects are merely ideas of the mind. The *Yogāchāras* argue that just as in the case of dreams and hallucinations, things are fancied to exist in an outside world though they do not really exsit there, so also in waking or normal visions the objects which appear to be out there, are really ideas in the mind. There are no grounds for believing in the existence of an external object, for it cannot be shown that the object is different from the consciousness of the object. For example the blue colour and the consciousness of blue colour are identical since they are never perceived to exist separately. If they appear as separate, it is owing to an illusion, just as the moon may appear as two to a person under the influence of alcohol. Objects are never known except to consciousness; hence objects have no existence apart from some knower.[18]

In addition to the mind-dependence of objects, there is another view characteristic of the *Yogāchāras*, which Rāmānuja shares. It is that the mind in one of its aspects acts as a storehouse of all impressions of the past. This aspect of mind is called the potential mind or *Ālaya-Vijñāna*. Mind in this aspect is not a static unchanging substance but a stream of continually changing states. By proper self-discipline and by the use of physical culture, or Yoga, potential mind can be so controlled as to yield only desirable mental states and not the undesirable ones. In this way the potential mind becomes less and less attached to the external world and realizes its identity with the total stream of consciousness which is the mind.[19]

Like the *Yogāchāras* then, Rāmānuja not only considers reality as of the nature of mind, but, more than this, it is possible to see that Rāmānuja's conception of individual selves is similar to the potential mind or selves of *Yogā-*

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18. Satischandra Chatterjee, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1939, 1950), 4th ed., p. 150.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 151-152.

chāra, considered as created and given independent status. Further still both Rāmānuja and the school of *Yogāchara* emphasize the use of Yoga as a means of gaining detachment from the external world and achieving greater harmony with the absolute Mind. In the case of Rāmānuja it is the individual independent self which strives to achieve a closer relationship with the absolute Brahman, whereas in the case of *Yogāchāra*, it is the potential mind which strives for closer unity with the ultimate stream of consciousness.[20]

While Rāmānuja, in common with the *Yogāchāras*, affirms that mind is the ultimate reality, he, no more than Bowne, denies the existence of an external world. It is at this point that he exhibits affiliations with still another school of Buddhistic thought, the *Sautrāntikas*. The latter, not only accept mind but a world over against it, their argument being that if we never actually perceived external objects, the very conception of such objects would be meaningless. In opposition to the *Yogāchāra* school of thought which claims that external objects are in reality forms of consciousness, the *Sautrāntikas* argue that whenever we perceive an object, say a pot, the pot is felt to be external and perception of it internal, that is, in the mind. So the object from the very beginning is felt to be different from and not identical with consciousness. If the perceived pot were one with the subject, that is, with the mind perceiving it, the perceiver would identify himself with the pot, and so say, "I am the table, or apple, etc.," instead of saying I perceive the table or apple.[21]

For the *Sautrāntika* school, then, external objects exist outside of all consciousness. It is these objects that account for the particular forms present in the different states of consciousness From these forms or representations present in the mind, we can infer the existence of their causes,

20 Satischandra Chatterjee, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 4th ed, p 152

21. *Ibid*, p 153.

i.e., the objects themselves. Veridical perception consists in the similitude between the presented object and the object itself. The senses present us with the object, and correctly, when they register those features which belong to the object and to it alone.[22] We cannot perceive any object at will for perception depends upon the presence of four different conditions. They are: (a) presence of the object which imparts its form to consciousness; (b) presence at the same time of a conscious mind in a state ready to receive the form; (c) functioning of the sense or senses which determine the particular quality of consciousness, whether tactual, visual, or other; and (d) presence of some favourable auxiliary condition, such as light, convenient position, perceptible magnitude, et cetera.[23] All these conditions combined bring about the perception of the object. The form of the object thus generated in the mind is the effect of the object. But what the mind immediately grasps or knows, is not the existence of the object, but the copy or representation of it in consciousness. From this representation in the mind, the existence of the object, without which the copy would not arise is inferred.[24] In this way the *Sautrāntika* school of Buddhism emphasizes the function of mind in constructing the empirical world.[25]

Although Rāmānuja goes beyond this theory of knowledge, yet he accepts sensory and sense perception as levels of knowledge.[26] He accepts them as yielding partial truth. To Rāmānuja knowledge consists of sense perception, inference, testimony and spiritual intuition or *Brahmajñāna* or God-knowledge. So then it is with regard to the

22 S. N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 154.

23. Satischandra Chatterjee, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, 4th ed., p. 154.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

25. S. Radhakrishnan, "ed.," *History of Philosphy Eastern and Western*, p. 200.

26. S. Radhakrishnan, "ed," *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western*, p. 307.

first two levels of knowledge that Rāmānuja is in agreement with the *Sautrāntika* school of Buddhism.

RĀMĀNUJA AND HIS RELATION TO *SĀṄKHYA* SYSTEM

In the *Sāṅkhya system* two principles figure as the ultimate feature of reality. They go by the names of *Purusa* and *Prakṛti*. *Puruṣa* stands for ultimate selves or spirits which are unchanging and eternal and are characterized by pure consciousness. *Prakṛti* stands for the physical order of phenomena. If *Sāṅkhya*, for which the number of selves is infinite, is to be described as dualistic, it is only by taking *Purusa* as a class and considering it as one kind of reality and *prakṛti* as another. Now the independence of *prakṛti* or the material world derives from the Sāṅkhyan theory of causation, called *Satkārya-Vāda*. According to this theory, the effect, prior to its production, exists in the cause.[27] The argument is that were the effect really inexistent in the material cause, no agent could bring the effect into existence. No man can turn blue into red or sugar into salt. So when any material effect is produced, we are obliged to infer that it pre-exists in the cause, that it mainfests itself only under certain favourable conditions, "as when oil is produced by pressing seeds."[28] If a thing produces only those effects which are already prefigured in it, causes are related to their effects only in so far as they contain the latter, and they are related to nothing else. That effects somehow exist in their causes is shown by the fact that only certain effects can be produced from certain causes, as, for example, curds from milk or cloth from threads. Unless this were so, the potter could dispense with clay in making his pots; he might use some other material equally well. But this is what he cannot do. All this is to say that causes are potentially their effects. Indeed, *Sānkhya* insists that cause and effect are one and the same. If the cause exists, the effect must also

27. Satischandra Chatterjee, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, p 259

28 *Ibid*, p 260.

exist, cause and effect are the implicit and explicit states of the same substance. A statue is the same as its material cause shape and form are already present in the marble Finally, it is pointed out that the only alternative to this view is the supposition that something can come from nothing, which is absurd [29]

It is in terms of this theory of causation that Sānkhya undertakes to explain the world whose source is matter and which exists in independence of *Purusa* or the self The world in all its variety originates from *Prakrti* or the primal matter The things in it occupy a limited space, are impermanent, and depend in their subsistence and functioning upon a cause necessarily greater than themselves This cause is *Prakrti*, which is a complex unity of three elements, *sattva, rajas*, and *tamas* [30] Sattva is light in weight and luminous It is the cause of the buoyancy of things For example, *Sattva* as present in the sense organs makes them fit and competent for the apprehension of their objects *Rajas* is activity and movement and accounts for change In its absence *sattva* and *tamas* would be rendered inactive *Tamas* is characterized by heaviness and obstructiveness It causes gravitation in material bodies and insensitivity in organs These three elements co-operate although they are naturally opposed to each other, as, for instance, *sattva* illumines while *tamas* obscures The proportion in which they exist and the manner in which they co-operate accounts for the variety of phenomena

Sankhya holds that the whole process of development or evolution is teleological [31] But of this pervasive purposiveness *Prakrti* is not in the least conscious Yet *Sankhya* considers intelligence, understanding feeling, willing, and all other psychical phenomena as products of nature The apparent contradiction involved in the development of in-

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29 Chandradhar Sharma *Indian Philosophy*, (Banaras Nand Kishore and Bros, 1952), p 212

30 *Ibid*, p 221

31 Sharma, *Indian Philosophy*, p 224

telligence from the unconscious *Prakṛti* is explained by the theory of *Purusa*.

Purusa is the unchanging and abiding spirit. It is of the nature of pure consciousness. Devoid of sensible quality, it cannot be internally or externally perceived, for perception, whether mental or physical, is always of objects which are the products of *gunās* or qualities.[32] According to *Sāṅkhya*, *Purusa* or the self is a conscious spirit which is the subject and never the object of knoweldge. It is not a substance with the attribute of consciousness, but pure consciousness as such. Consciousness is its very essence and not mere quality of it.

> The self is above all change and activity. It is uncaused, eternal and all pervading reality which is free from all attachment and unaffected by all objects. All change and activity, all pleasures and pains belong really to matter and its products like the body, mind and intellect. It is sheer ignorance to think that the self is the body or the senses or the mind or the intellect.[33]

Several arguments are advanced to prove the existence of the self as the transcendent subject of experience. For one thing, it is pointed out that all the objects of the world are means to ends, never, as so many aggregates or collocations of parts, but ends in themselves. They exist not for their own sake, but for the sake of beings whose purpose they serve, and these beings must be distinct and different from them. Of these beings it cannot be said that they are unconscious things made of parts, like physical objects, for in that case they themselves would be means and not ends. Hence they must be conscious selves to whose ends all physical objects are the means. Again, it is reasoned that all material objects including the mind and intellect, must be controlled and directed by some intelligent principle, if they are to achieve or realize their ends. A machine does

32 *Ibid*, p. 214 ff.

33 Satischandra Chatterjee, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, p. 269.

its work only when placed under the guidance of some person. So Sāṅkhya argues that if nature serves the ends it does, it is because there are selves who guide the operations of *Prakṛti* and all her products. Further still, it is argued that all the objects of the world are inseparable from pleasure, pain or indifference. Since pleasure and pain have meaning only as they are experienced by a conscious experiencer, it follows that there must be a conscious self or selves for whom nature is pleasure, pain or indifference. Moreover, there is the fact that at least some selves sincerely endeavour to attain final release from all suffering. Such seeking is impossible for the physical world, for by its very nature the physical world causes suffering rather than relief from it. And here light is shed on the Sāṅkhya belief in the teleological character of *Prakrti*. *Prakrti* is purposeful because it provides the psychical instrumentality by means of which *Purusa* enjoys the infinite variety of phenomena. Further yet, it points the way of liberation for the individual *Purusas*. With regard to this matter, we read:

> Spirit exists (as distinct from matter), since collocations serve a purpose of some (being) other than themselves, since this other must be the reverse of (what is composed of) the three constituents, and so on, since there must be control (of the collocations), since there must be an enjoyer, and since there is activity for the purpose of release (from three-fold misery).[34]

For *Sāṅkhya* there are a plurality of selves each connected with a material body. More than one reason is adduced for this belief. For one thing, there is not one birth and death, but many; *for another, there is the variety* of sensory and motor endowments. The birth or death of one individual is not the birth or death of all; the blindness or deafness of one is not the blindness or deafness of all. So there are many selves and not just one. *Sāṅkhya's* position concerning the plurality of *Purusa* or spirit is clear from the following passage.

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34. S. S. Suryanārāyana Sāstri, "ed", *The Sāṅkhyakarika of Iswara Krishna*, (Madras: University of Madras, 1935), p. 47.

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34. S. S. Suryanārāyana Sāstri, "ed", *The Sānkhyakarika of Iswara Krishna*, (Madras : University of Madras, 1935), p. 47.

> The plurality of spirits certainly follows from the distributive (nature) of the incidence of birth and death of (the endowment of) the instruments (of cognition and action), from (bodies) engaging in action, not all at the same time, and also from differences in (the proportion of) the three constituents.[35]

Thus *Sāṅkhya* philosophy traces the whole course of the world to the interplay of two ultimate principles, *Purusa* or spirit, and *Prakṛti* or primal matter. *Prakṛti* is the cause of the world of physical things, organic bodies, and psychical products like the mind (*manas*) *and the intellect* (*buddhi*). *Prakrti* is active and ever changing but is blind and unintelligent. *Purusa* is pure consciousness. It consists of many selves which are eternal and unchanging principles of pure consciousness. Although the selves are intelligent, they are inactive. It is in contact with such conscious and intelligent selves that the unconscious and unintelligent *Prakrti* evolves the world of experience. It seems that the mere presence of *Purusa* or the self is sufficient to move *Prakrti* to act, although *Purusa* itself remains unmoved. Similarly, it is the reflection of the conscious self in the unconscious intellect that explains the cognitive and other psychical functions performed by the intellect. Just how the proximity of *Purusa* can be the cause of changes in *Prakrti*, but not in the *Purusa* is not explained. Nor is it clear how an unintelligent material principle, like the intellect, can reflect pure consciousness, which is immaterial, and thereby become conscious and intelligent. With regard to the plurality of selves maintained by Sāṅkhya, there is the difficulty that the differences between them do not pertain to the self or *Purusa* as pure consciousness, but only to the bodies associated with it. So far as their intrinsic nature, which is pure consciousness, is concerned, there is nothing to distinguish between one self and another.[36]

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35 Suryanārāyana Sāstri, "ed," *The Sānkhyakarika of Iswara Krishna*, pp 49-50

36 It should be pointed out here that in certain of its aspects the early literature of *Sānkhya* holds ti a theistic conception and thus tries to remove the contradictions involved in the notions of

The foregoing suggests several points of comparison with the system of Rāmānuja. For Rāmānuja as for Sankhya, *Puruṣa* or the self and matter or *Prakṛti*, are independent realities, with this difference that in the theistic view of Rāmānuja, *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* are related in God who comprehends them both, so that although they are independent of and different from each other, they are aspects of the supreme being or Brahman. We have already said that there is no clear indication in *Sāṅkhya* as to what exactly the relation is between *Purusa* and *Prakṛti*. It is supposed that *Purusa* influences the material world towards an end. If *Sāṅkhya* is interpreted in a theistic sense, the difficulty is overcome as in the case of Rāmānuja, by a theory of personality. Further, as in *Sāṅkhya* system, so in Rāmānuja, a plurality of selves is subscribed to, and both systems hold that the individual selves are attached to matter, just as both systems speak of the striving of the selves to gain release from this attachment to matter. Finally like *Sāṅkhya,* Rāmānuja speaks of matter as uncreated and eternal but comprehended in God and controlled by Him.

RĀMĀNUJA AND THE YOGA SYSTEM

Unlike *Sāṅkhya,* the Yoga system views God as the supreme person who exists in and by himself. In harmony

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Puruṣa and *Prakṛti*. The absolute self is viewed as a self-conscious God who has *Prakṛti* as one of his constituent elements, by means of which he appears in the empirical world. As a self-conscious system and as the source of all activity, the absolute is regarded as super-personal. The individual soul is a differentiation of the absolute who is present undivided in each individual self. The theistic view of *Sāṅkhya* overcomes many inconsistencies by viewing reality as a System of persons. But it reduces personality to three forms. One form is that of the personality of God, which is considered to be super-human personality, another is the human personality which is possessed by human selves and still a third is called subhuman personality which belongs to all other beings and things According to early *Sāṅkhya* therefore, the universe is a system of different grades of persons, God is the supreme person and all other beings such as man, animals and things are God's individualizations or moments or modes. For fuller treatment, see Mujumdar, *Sāṅkhya Conception of Personality*, Calcutta, Calcutta University Press, 1930.

with Sāṅkhya though, Yoga posits the existence of *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*—two independent realities which by their proximity cause the world and account for the manifold things in it. In the Sāṅkhya system, God is brought in to explain the initiation of the process of evolution; in other words, the Yoga system seeks to prove the existence of God, not by means of the cosmological argument but resorts rather to a theory of the continuity of knowledge and power. Briefly, the argument is that:

> Knowledge is found to vary in extent and scope from small to great in different subjects. Whatever is possessed of degrees of excellence, must have its maximum in some substratum. For instance, magnitude which varies in degree is minimum in the atom and maximum in space. So there must be a person in whom knowledge reaches its maximum. That is God.[37]

But this is not the only argument that Yoga system employs to prove the existence of God. Another proof consists of an inference drawn from the association and dissociation of *Purusa* and *Prakrti*. The creation of the world of things is ascribable to the association of *Puruṣa* with *Prakṛti*, while the dissolution of the world is owing to the dissociation of *Purusa* from *Prakṛti*. *Purusa* and *Prakrti* are two independent principles, so that there can be no natural relation between them; yet they are related and their relation is explicable only on the basis of an intelligent principle that brings them together, as well as separates them.

Moreover, such association and dissociation of the two principles are essential to the moral and spiritual fulfilment of each individual self. As in *Sāṅkhya*, so in Yoga each self struggles to free itself from the overwhelming influence of *Prakrti* and to come to a clearer consciousness of itself. Further, Yoga holds, as does Sāṅkhya, that knowledge of the distinction between self and not-self leads to the search for release or emancipation from attachment to *Prakrti*. And it upholds the view also that worshipful medi-

37. S Radhakrishnan, "ed", *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western*, Vol I, p. 256

tation upon the Absolute or *Purusa* brings about enlightenment and leads to the freedom of the self. Accordingly the Yoga system contains practical measures and teachings which are designed as aids to the process of self-knowledge or freedom. Yoga explains the details of such knowledge as follows:

> The purity and freedom of the self are obscured by the constant-fluctuations of mind with which the self identifies himself. This identification is due to primal ignorance (*avidyā*) which is a positive entity and manifests itself in the forms of perverted cognitions.[38]

So under the influence of ignorance, the self regards what is not eternal as eternal, what is impure as pure, pain as pleasure, and not-self as self. It is also owing to the influence of ignorance that the self identifies itself with intelligence, which is a product of *Prakṛti* or matter. When such identification occurs, the self begins to feel attachment and hatred, a will to live and constant fear of death. Fear, hatred and attachment are the sort of passions that block the emergence of the spiritual life. Hence, practical measures are prescribed by Yoga for the discipline of mind and body. Freedom of the mind or self is obtained by means of spiritual insight, which enables the individual self to know that it is the pure immortal spirit. Spiritual insight can be had only as the mind is purified of all types of wandering thoughts and evil designs.

The disciplines aimed at purifying the mind are those involved in the cultivation of love and friendliness, compassion for the distressed, joy at the spiritual exaltation of pious men, and indifference to the careless. More still, "such propadeutic disciplines as non-injury (*Ahiṁsā*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), sexual continence (*brahma-carya*) and non-appropriation (*a-parigraha*) are necessary."[39] Among these non-injury is the most

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38. S. Radhakrishnan, "ed.", *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western*, Vol. I, p.256.

39. S. Radhakrishnan, "ed.", *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western*, Vol. I, p. 257.

important and essential, since all else is involved in it. It is the central truth. Any thought or action that leads to injury is false. But all these propadeutic disciplines are indispensable to the practice of concentration. In concentration the mind develops detachment from the physical objects of sense and is constantly focused upon thought of the Infinite. In the Yoga system, no less than in Sāṅkhya, mere knowledge of the distinction between matter and spirit, while it is necessary, is not sufficient condition for liberation or freedom of the spirit. In addition to such knowledge:

> The established psychical tendencies (the *Saṁskārās* and the *Vāsanās*) should be destroyed first by means of a regular and graded practice, for it is they which are the cause of the cycles of birth and death. When they are destroyed, and only when they are destroyed, must the bondage of the body necessarily disappear.[40]

Such, briefly is the Yoga system, and in relating Rāmānuja to it, we should bear in mind that although he considers *Purusa* and *Prakṛti* as distinct entities, he yet includes them both in the absolute Brahman. To him Brahman "is a personality which comprehends within itself all plurality and difference and is characterized by all the qualities of perfection."[41] Individual selves are actually sparks or qualified parts of the absolute Brahman, and "though they are never outside Brahman, yet they enjoy a separate personal existence forever".[42] Rāmānuja, subscribes to Yogic practices as a discipline enabling the individual self to achieve concentration upon the infinite self. Unlike the Yoga system, however, in which the final goal is identification of the finite and infinite, Rāmānuja, while he subscribes to Yogic practices as purifying the individual soul, believes further that after leaving the body it ascends by means of the true knowledge of Brahman to a transcendental

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40. Jwala Prasad, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, (Nagpur: Nagpur University Press, 1932), p 111
41. *Ibid.*, p 137
42. *Ibid*, p. 138

sphere, where it exists in infinite knowledge, deified.[43] Yet deified as it is, it does not have "cosmic rulership."[44] The distinction between the ātman [the individual self] and Brahman is eternal, but the sense of separateness disappears.[45]

RĀMĀNUJA'S RELATION TO *VEDĀNTIC* SYSTEM

Vedānta develops and systematizes the philosophical implications of the texts of the *Upanisads.* All forms of *Vedānta* stand for the principle that reality is ultimately traceable to the universal self, Brahman.

> The *Upanisads* conceive Brahman not only as the pure ground of all reality and consciousness, but also as the ultimate source of all joy. Worldly pleasures are only the distorted fragments of that joy, just as worldly objects are limited manifestations of that reality.[46]

Although the beginnings of *Vedānta* go as far back as the *Ṛg-Veda* and the *Upanisads*, yet the development of *Vedānta* depends on such individual interpreters and teachers "as Gaudapāda, Śankarāchārya, Rāmānujacharya, Vallabhāchārya and their followers."[47] There are many points in common between these interpreters, even though they differ at specific points. It is therefore easy to see the relationship of Rāmānuja to the total system of *Vedānta.*

Along with other *Vedānta* systems, Rāmānuja rejects the view that the world is a product of material elements which combine to form objects To him, the world and the plurality of selves are a result of the creative activity of the absolute Brahman, which as a personality compre-

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43. S. Radhakrishnan, "ed", *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western,* Vol. I, p 318

44 *Ibid*, p. 319

45 *Ibid*, p. 319

46. Satischandra Chatterjee, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy,* p 364

47. Jwala Prasad, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy,* p 124

hends within itself all plurality[48] All schools of *Vedanta* deal with the problem of the external world, some affirming its reality, others denying it Śankara, for example, holds that the world of experience with all its variety is illusory and knowledge of it therefore false To Rāmānuja, on the contrary, the world of experience is "real and forms a manifestation of the nature and powers of Brahman"[49] Hence, in his view knowledge of the external world is real knowledge

There is, however, a difficulty in Rāmānuja's system It is his conception of matter as something unconscious, which is yet contained in Brahman, who is conscious If the ultimate and all comprehensive reality is conscious and active, must not its manifestations also be *ipso facto* of the same nature? The problem is one to which Rāmānuja appears to give no satisfactory answer We shall have occasion to deal with the matter in greater detail later in the work

RAMANUJA S RELATION TO *ADVAITA* OR *VEDANTA* OF NON DUALITY

The main thesis of *advaita* is found in the *Vedanta sutras of Badarayana* as interpreted by Śankara The opening lines run as follows

> It is a matter not requiring any proof that the object and subject, whose respective spheres are the notion of the 'Thou' (the non ego) and the 'Ego', and which are opposed to each other as much as darkness and light are, cannot be identified Hence it follows that it is wrong to super-impose upon the subject, whose self is intelligence and which has for its sphere the notion of the Ego—the object whose sphere is the notion of the non Ego, and the attributes of the object, and *vice-versa* to super impose the subject and the attributes of the subject on the object In spite of this it is on the part of man a natural procedure which has its cause in wrong knowledge—not to distinguish the two entities (object

48 Jawla Prasad *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, p 136
49 *Ibid* p 138

> and subject) and their respective attributes, although they are absolutely distinct, but to super-impose upon each the characteristic nature and attributes of the other, and thus, coupling the real and the unreal to make use of such expressions such as 'Thou am I', 'That is mine'.[50]

Now for Śaṅkara, Brahman is the only reality, infinite, eternal and the cause of all things. This reality cannot be known or experienced.

> It is inapprehensible by logical knowledge. It is pure inwardness of which no conceptual interpretation is possible. It is indivisible, inalienable. It is neither external or conditioned by external causation. To define it is to transmute it into object. We cannot say that it is one It is non-dual (*advaita*).[51]

Although indescribable and inexperienceable, Brahman is not a bare abstraction or a mere nothing. Thus commenting on the *Chandogya Upaniṣad,* Śaṅkara says: "Those who imagine that that which is free from all determinations is as good as non-being are the feeble-minded."[52] And the ultimate reality, being or Brahman, is that which gives meaning to life, for being cannot be explained as arising from non-being. So the reality of being is presupposed in the existence of anything. By means of various adjuncts this ultimate being, which is non-dual, homogeneous, and eternal, assumes different forms. "When it (Brahman) performs the function of living it is called the vital force, when it speaks, the organ of speech, when it sees, the eye, when it hears, the ear, and when it thinks, the mind."[53]

Consciousness, since it is of the essence of Brahman, is not predicable of it.[54] For the substance-attribute category

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50. Śaṅkara Acharya, *The Vednta Sutras,* "translated by" George Thibaut, (Oxford: Clarenden Press, 1890), p. 3.

51. S. Radhakrishnan, "ed.", *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western,* Vol. I, p. 275.

52. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads,* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1953), p. 491.

53. *Ibid.,* p. 491.

54. Sri Śaṅkarāchārya, *A Thousand Teachings,* "translated by", Swami Yogadananda, (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math,), 1949, 2nd ed.), p. 91.

falsifies rather than expresses the relation between Brahman and consciousness Brahman is neither an independent something which somehow owns and possesses the attribute of consciousness, nor is it something in which attributes inhere Just as light is inseparable from the sun and heat from fire, so consciousness is inseparable from Brahman Consequently, Śankara reasons that there is no intelligible sense in which we can speak of Brahman as knowing or being aware of itself In Brahman, there is no distinction between knower and known

The finite self as constituted of consciousness is immutable, though the objects known by it are in constant flux All things change and pass away, but the self persists and is indestructible In other words, the self is "free from change and perpetually the same"[55] If it were otherwise and the self were as changeful as its objects, knowledge would be impossible, even knowledge of change Hence there is the autonomy of the self "As pure consciousness, the self is self-existent No one can disprove its independence of other things inasmuch as it never ceases to exist"[56] Its eternal immutability is self-evident and is thus in no need of evidence What is in need of evidence is the object of knowledge Its being known depends upon evidence The self, on the contrary, "being of the nature of pure knowledge does not depend on an evidence to prove that it exists or that it is the knower"[57] So the self is "of the nature of eternal and self-effulgent knowledge not dependent on anything else"[58] In Śankara's view, therefore, knowledge is of the very essence of Brahman It is not an attribute which qualifies Brahman

Śankara takes a realistic position with regard to the function of knowledge Its function is to reveal the real nature of things Truth is the agreement between thought

55 *Ibid.*, p 55
56 *Ibid*, p 57
57 *Ibid.*, p 57
58 *Ibid* p 62

and reality. Where there is no parity between thought and thing, there is no knowledge. In this realistic vein, Śaṅkara insists upon *the relation of logic to reality. To deny this* is to deny the relation of logic to truth. Further, according to Śaṅkara, "the knowledge of the real nature of a thing does not depend on human notions, but on the thing itself."[59]

> The reason is that there can be no option regarding the real nature of a thing: it cannot be of this nature as well as of that nature and also of a third one. Knowledge which satisfies this condition, i.e. knowledge which reveals reality, which is controlled by it, and which is not relative to human notions, is real knowledge. It is *tatvajñāna.*[60]

"At the same time it is Samyagjñāna."[61] All real knowledge whether it is spiritual or sensuous, intuitional or perceptual, is characterized by unchangeability. In this respect all knowledge is one and the same, whether its object is Brahman or some sensuous particular. The knowledge that fire is hot, is as knowledge, on an equal footing with the knowledge of Brahman as absolute being, intelligence and bliss, or the knowledge that the world is transitory and without essence.

True knowledge is independent of time, place, and circumstance. To Śankara this is so because the nature of a thing is eternal; it can never be other than what it is. It is with these eternal essences that knowledge is concerned, so that the marks of knowledge are universality and necessity. The knowledge, for example, that fire is hot corresponds to the nature of the object and is true irrespective of time, place and circumstance, which is to say that it is universal and necessary. And so likewise are all types of knowledge whether *apriori* or *aposteriori*, perceptual or intuitive. Whether the knowledge is of God, or the self

59. R. P. Singh, *The Vedanta of Śaṅkara*, (Jaipur: Bharat Publishing House, 1949), p. 168.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 168
61. *Ibid*, p. 168.

or of empirical phenomena, it is as revelatory of eternal essences, possessed of the same logical status.

Yet this equality of all knowledge does not prevent Śaṅkara from drawing a distinction between universal and particular knowledge. But the distinction is one of value and not of logic. R. P. Singh writes that:

> Śaṅkara calls it the distinction between *Viśesa Vijñāna* and *Nirviśesa Vijñāna*, i.e., knowledge of reality as limited by name and form, and reality as unlimited by any adjunct, because all limiting adjuncts are nothing other than Brahman which is the reality and a thing cannot be limited by its own self.[62]

Universal knowledge alone is conducive to the attainment of the highest good. While the logical form of such judgments as 'fire is hot' and 'Brahman comprises all selves', is the same, still the one as particular has not the value of the other, which is universal. In judging that fire is hot, we have perfect knowledge, but perfect only in a certain sense, and not absolutely. For fire, as all other phenomena, is an effect of being, and any true judgment about it is in the last analysis a judgment about being. To judge of it as fire merely is to judge of a mere name and form. It is only in relation to pure being that it is truly known, for the basis of all true knowledge is pure being. Particular knowledge is knowledge of the real through its limiting adjuncts, and the essence of these lies precisely in their incompleteness. Such knowledge, when it assumes a guise not its own, "is knowledge of a thing not having its being in and through the absolute but having a self-subsisting independence and enjoying an existence in its own right and for its own self. To view a thing thus is to view it falsely."[63] This is to say that "particular knowledge is incomplete knowledge, which is the same as knowledge of an incomplete reality, the universal knowledge is know-

62. R P. Singh, *The Vedanta of Śaṅkara*, p. 173.
63 *Ibid*, p. 174.

ledge of the reality in its absolute completeness."[64] And this for Śaṅkara is the knowledge of Brahman.

With regard to the relation of the world of things to the absolute of Brahman, Śaṅkara does not assert the absolute oneness of Brahman and the world, but only denies their difference. Brahman, he opines, is the only reality, absolute, homogeneous, impersonal and transcendent. It is the universal, the only self. How, then, is one to account for the differences and plurality so characteristic of the world of experience? They are illusory and as such ascribable of false knowledge, in a word, to *Māyā*. *Māyā* itself is inexplicable.

> It covers true reality like darkness, and is the cause of all current distinctions of subject and object, cause and effect, good and evil, birth and death, etc.[65]

The doctrine of *Māyā* is an attempt to explain, if 'explain' is the right word, the relation between ultimate reality and the created world of things. The meaning of the term '*māyā*' varies from one context to another in Śaṅkara. So he uses it to signify the phenomenal character of the world. Or he uses it to convey the incomprehensible character of the relation between the world of things and the absolute Brahman, in that it rests upon Brahman, the world is caused by him, yet Brahman is not touched or influenced by the world. Again, Śaṅkara uses *Māyā* as the principle underlying the assumption that the world is really the appearance of Brahman. Or he may employ it to signify the creative power of the perfect personality or *Īśvara* by whose activity the world of things has come to be.

> It is this creative power of *Īśvara* or God that is transformed into *Upādhi* or limitation, the unmanifested matter (*avyakta Prakṛti*), from which all existence issues. If knowledge of Brahman is true knowledge, then the knowledge of the particulars, namely the empirical world, is false knowledge, the latter being

64. R. P. Singh, *The Vedanta of Śaṅkara*, p. 174.
65. Jwala Prasad, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, p. 133.

> the cause of the distinctions of subject and object, cause and effect, good and evil, birth and death, etc. And true knowledge, knowledge of Brahman, is the only way of overcoming *māyā*.[66]

Such knowledge is true enlightenment. It is,

> A state of complete identification of the individual self with the universal self of Brahman. It is a state in which all distinctions, even that of subject and object, disappear, and consequently a bare identity or unity of Brahman is all that is left.[67]

Where then do the individual selves fit into this picture? What is their relation to the absolute self? To Śaṅkara, the individual self or the *jīva* is a composite of self and not-self.

> All experience is based on the confusion between the two. The wrong identification (*adhyāsa*) of the self with the not-self is the basis of all experience. Through association with the limitations (*upādhi*) like the internal organ (*antah-karaṇa*) the self functions as enjoyer subject to rebirth or bondage. When we speak of the individual *jīva* as born or as growing we mean that its adjuncts come into being or grow and not that the spirit is born or grows. *Jīva* is an empirical form or manifestation of Brahman. Its finitude and separateness are due to the limitations of the media. The human individual belongs to the object side, is an element in the perpetual procession of *Saṁsāra*.[68]

Viewed in its true character, distinct from adjuncts, the individual self is consciousness It is an objective cognition, it is the very form of consciousness. All changes are in this consciousness and not changes of it. The individual consciousness is really the witness or *sākṣin* of the infinite consciousness. The *sākṣin* is always present, while the changes which it witnesses come and go. The knower is implied in all empirical knowledge, but it is not itself an

66 Jwala Prasad, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, p 133-134

67 *Ibid*, p 134

68 S Radhakrishnan, *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western*, p 280

object of such knowledge. Nothing can be both subject and object. For example, the eye can see other things but not itself. "When we say we know ourselves, it is the empirical self that we know. The true self cannot be known as an object, though as subject it is self-revealing."[69] The relation *between the supreme self and the individual self is* like the relation between the *I* and the *Thou*. The *I* element is so opposed to the not-self, or the *Thou* element, that they cannot be predicated of each other. Logically, no explanation can be adduced for the relation between the *I* and the *not-I*. There is a psychological tendency on the part of the individual selves to regard themselves as real, independently of the absolute self. This tendency of the mind is owing to ignorance or *māyā* and cannot be traced to any source, for "*māyā* covers the whole of cosmic manifestation."[70] When freed from *māyā* or ignorance, the individual souls, no longer harbour the illusion of distinctness from one another. What happens in the state of liberation is not the disappearance of all plurality but the loss rather of the ego sense. And this is not loss of "life and existence."[71]

We are now in a position to estimate Rāmānuja's relation to the Vedāntic theory as interpreted by Śaṅkara. To Śaṅkara, as we have seen, Being is homogeneous consciousness and perpetuity of blisful existence. In his view, further, particulars are determinations of Being, and as so determined, Being cannot be absolute. To Rāmānuja, however, the Absolute is inclusive of particulars in all their infinite variety. The Absolute is the synthesis of all its determinations. It is precisely through the variety of its attributes that the absolute more completely expresses its richness. Although Rāmānuja agrees with Śaṅkara that consciousness is the basis of all knowledge and experience, he yet differs from him in his conception of Being. Śaṅkara distinguishes

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69. S. Radhakrishnan, *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western*, p. 280.

70. *Ibid*, p. 280.

71. *Ibid*, p. 281.

between the changing character of human thought and the immutable character of absolute thought or pure cognition, arguing that human thought involves relations, whereas absolute thought does not. Śaṅkara is therefore, obliged to assert the static character of absolute cognition. For Rāmānuja, all knowledge, whether human or divine involves relation, as is shown by judgment, which is the unit of all knowledge. Absolute cognition in the absence of all determination is not knowledge. Knowledge is knowledge just because it involves the recognition of the relation between thought and thing. It is this that makes knowledge a dynamic process in which as more and more relations are discovered, the more numerous the determinations that are known and so synthesised. Knowledge when it is not fully synthesised, remains to that extent indeterminate, so that what is known is not known in the fullness of its relations.

While he agrees with Śaṅkara that Being is the absolute category, Rāmānuja differs from him in emphasizing the concrete nature of Being, which in his view, as we have seen, is a synthesis of attributes. His Absolute is not of the abstract and impersonal sort which we have encountered in Śaṅkara. For Rāmānuja, the Absolute contains the phenomenal world with all its categories as moments within itself Again, although both thinkers come together in viewing the Absolute as being of the nature of consciousness, they also part company at this point. Śaṅkara denies character or personality to the Absolute, considering the Absolute as the highest abstraction of impersonal consciousness. Being is identity, not unity, for if attributes are posited of Being, it follows that Being is capable of division. Neither divided nor synthesised into a unity, Being for Śaṅkara is absolute identity, with no place in it for attributes. The latter, if they are anything, are the same as Being. It is true that Rāmānuja himself emphasizes the identity of Being, but the identity he has in mind is concrete identity. He is aware that empty identity and sheer difference are incapable of synthesis, so that he conceives of

a relation wherein the identity is not merely formal. Thus in the case of Brahman on the one hand and the individual selves and the world on the other, the relation between them is like the relation between body and mind. The individual selves and the world are *śakti* or power or quality of Brahman. *Śakti* and its possessor are inseparable, yet different. Accordingly, the Absolute is not indeterminate but determinate. That is, it is particularized by *śakti* or power. The latter has no existence apart from Brahman, and to that extent there is identity between the two, yet the one is not the other, and there is thus difference between them.

Both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja attach the greatest importance to liberation of the individual selves, with this difference that whereas for Śaṅkara, the experiences of the individual self add nothing to its development, ending only in an identification with Brahman, for Rāmānuja liberation is a gain in knowledge, bliss and being. Unlike Śaṅkara, he holds that individual experience is real, not illusory, and is a manifestation of the nature and powers of the Absolute Brahman.

It should be clear from the foregoing that, while there is much in common between *advaita Vedānta* of Śaṅkara and *Viśistādvaita*, they also differ in important respects. But *Advaita* is only one branch of the *Vedānta* system and we proceed now to determine Rāmānuja's relation to other branches.

RĀMĀNUJA'S RELATION TO THE *DVAITA* OR DUALISTIC *VEDĀNTA*

Madhva, the chief representative of the system we are about to consider, takes the view that objects can be known as they are. To dispute this view is to deny the very possibility of knowledge. All cognition has an object, and could not exist without it. Further, true knowledge directly presents itself as true. Indeed, the criterion of such knowledge is self-evidence. Yet, since all true knowledge

is accompanied by intellectual and volitional harmony, we have a criterion which may be applied in doubtful cases For false knowledge is marked by the absence of harmony Given the self-evident character of true cognition, it is a mistake to suppose that truth may be inferred from the soundness of its source Such a view would make truth, which is the very essence of knowledge, dependent on conditions external to knowledge If knowledge were not the apprehension of objects as they are, then it follows "(a) that knowledge is objectless and it has nothing in it to explain itself, and (b) that knowledge is dependent on external conditions" [72]

That things are presented in knowledge as they are in themselves is evidenced to the self acting as 'witness' (*saksin*) All selves are capable of acting in this capacity and so of apprehending all that happens in the process of cognition At the same time Madhva points out that "the self, knower, knowledge, 'witness' and their self-evident nature are only distinctions in unity" [73] If they were altogether different, they could never be brought together Nor can pure identity or non-duality be posited of knowledge Pure identity is a contradiction in terms, for every case of identity necessarily involves distinction of the things identified No identity is conceivable, except as thus qualified (*sa visesa*)

The "witness" or *saksin* is that which endures throughout the self's varying states We might say that it is the very core of self For the waking state of the self it testifies to the knowledge derived from perception, inference and verbal testimony Perception results from the operation of this or that sense organ Whatever the organ, however, it does not work undirected by the self The self thus as an active principle is not determined by things that are external to it, as analysis of perception shows Inference in-

72 S Radhakrishnan, ed *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western*, p 323
73 *Ibid*, p 323

volves the presence of three terms, the major (*sādhya*), the middle (*hetu*), and the minor (*paksa*). This concomitance is discovered through repeated observation and is expressed : "If the middle, then the major."[74] The validity of verbal testimony (*āgama*) depends upon the cognition of what the words express. The truth of knowledge so yielded remains true whether verbalized or not. In the waking state, mind (*manas*) gives rise to memory as the result of past impressions as it does in the dream state as well. If dream objects are real as such, yet they do not possess the same status as actually perceived objects. The external sense organs do not function in sleep, which is to say that they are different from the self, for the self continues to function even in sleep. The awareness produced by the senses is always of some object, which is apprehended by the self or 'witness' or *sāksin* as : "This is external to self."[75] In all such cases of objective awareness, a modification of mind takes place in the form of a 'this'. In dreamless sleep the 'witness' alone functions It apprehends the self as asleep, an apprehension that memory recalls, as when I say, "till now I slept happily."[76]

The knowledge by 'witness' or (*sāksin*) differs from that which comes about through the modification of mind. The 'witness' (*sāksin*) grasps the object as it truly is, whereas mind may fail to do so. For example, the knowledge by 'witness' such as the awareness of the "I" as "I", or the awareness of happiness as enjoyed by "I" is always correct. On the other hand the mind may be mistaken in supposing that "this is silver," for example. Further yet, knowledge by 'witness' is independent of knowledge as a mental modification, and the latter, moreover, is dependent upon the former. Awareness of "I" is independent of mind, but the knowledge that "this is silver," since it necessarily involves the knowledge of time, is dependent upon witness,

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74 S. Radhakrishnan, *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western*, p. 323.

75 *Ibid.*, p. 324.

76 *Ibid.*, p 324

for such knowledge is owing to the latter That knowledge of time does not come from mind is evident from the fact that, though mind ceases to operate in sleep, we are yet aware of the passage of time Again, knowledge by 'witness' is self-evident knowledge, as knowledge through mental modification is not The one presents itself while presenting its object, the other presents us with items specified, but not by itself, as particulars Now awareness of the particulars as particulars is possible only in contrast to the rest of the universe, and awareness of the rest of the universe falls outside the scope of mental knowledge, which is confined to the particular as related to the mind by sense Hence knowledge that goes beyond the particular must be knowledge by 'witness'

Saksin or witnessing intelligence, is "the knower itself acting as an instrument of knowledge"[77] It involves perception but perception of a peculiar kind In this kind of perception the witnessing intelligence is not only the knower but also the instrument of knowledge And the objects of this perception are the intrinsic nature of the self, the self's properties or attributes such as pleasure, pain, *et cetera*[78] What other schools consider as objects of internal perception, are regarded by Madhva as perceptions of the witnessing subject

> But as perceptions such witnessing cognitions will be generated events and will thus lack the timelessness involved in the witnessing consciousness of temporal mental events as temporal[79]

For Madhva knowledge is never indeterminate but always possessed of a definite character It is a mistake to suppose that perception is in the first instance indeterminate Such a supposition is falsified by the fact that perception involves modification of mind, which in turn is dependent on 'witness' and 'witness', as noted above, grasps the object

77 S K. Maitra *Madhva Logic*, (Calcutta Calcutta University Press 1936), p XX.
78 *Ibid*, p XX.
79 *Ibid.*, p XX.

as it is. No less a mistake is the supposition that indeterminate knowledge may arise through reflection and meditation, for here too the contributions of mind and 'witness' are undeniable. In a word, to claim that knowledge is indeterminate contravenes the very nature of knowledge. Here we find that Madhva is really arguing against the position taken by Śaṅkara that knowledge is indeterminate.

In Madha's view reality consists of two sorts of 'reals,' one dependent and the other independent. Both being and non-being are included under the first. Being is either eternal or transitory, while the eternal is either conscious or inert. Further, Madhva describes being as that which is cognized in the initial perception, while non-being is that which is not so cognized, or that which is cognized as non-existing in the initial perception. Although non-being is the negation of a particular reference, Madhva yet assigns to it a locus with which it is identical.

It is here with regard to the problem of non-being that Rāmānuja specially differs from Madhva. To Rāmānuja, non-being is a relative concept which is intelligible not in itself, but only with reference to a locus and object. It is therefore not an ultimate, but indicative rather of a change in the condition of a thing or being. So while both thinkers accept the idea of non-being, they do not agree about its meaning. Nor do they agree either about the relation between the many and the one. Madhva differs from Śaṅkara *who asserts the one at the expense of the many, and from* Rāmānuja who makes the many a predicate of the one. Madhva cannot accept the position of Śaṅkara, because it denies the truth of the many nor can he accept the position of Rāmānuja, because it involves a relational individual consciousness and thus leads to an infinite regress. By means of his doctrine of specific particulars, Madhva believes he can introduce difference into the absolute without derogating from its character as absolute, and without involving himself in the regress of relational consciousness.

THE SYSTEM OF UNITY-IN-DIFFERENCE OR *BHEDĀBHEDA*

Much in common exists between this system represented by Bhāskara, and the system of Rāmānuja. The problem,

Bhāskara is most concerned with, is that of the relation of the absolute or Brahman to the finite world of things. For Śaṅkara, as we have seen, the absolute alone is real, so that the world of appearance, if it has any reality at all, cannot be different from the absolute; while for Madhva the world is absolutely different from Brahman. Now for Bhāskara too, the world is real, at the same time that it is both different and not-different from Brahman or *Bhedābheda.*

This appears to be the position of Rāmānuja as well, but with a difference of emphasis, as will be seen in a moment. Bhāskara's system represents a new approach to the fundamental problem of the relation of the one and the many. He insists that the relationship of difference or *bheda* and of non-difference or *abheda,* apply with equal and simultaneous validity to Brahman. His argument is based upon the cause-effect or whole-part relation.

Causality, he reasons, is neither a relation nor pure identity, nor sheer difference, but one of identity-in-difference. An effect differs from its cause, having a nature and function peculiar to itself, as may be illustrated, for example, by a clay jar. The jar, but not the lump of clay, may be used to fetch water, and in this respect, as in others, differs from the lump of clay, its cause. Yet at the same time the jar is not different from the clay, and as cause and effect here are one. On the other hand, the cause is more than the effect. Thus the lump of clay is capable of being moulded not only into a jar but a hundred other things besides. Still the cause is the effect, one with it and permeating the effect through and through. Both the clay and the jar are equally clay. On this basis, then, Bhāskara argues that the absolute is different from the world of things and souls, since these are only the effects of Brahman, their cause, and the cause is not exhausted in its effects. But it is true also that the absolute is not different from the world, since the cause permeates its effects. Accordingly, the world, corporeal as well as incorporeal, differs from the absolute, as possessing attributes and activities that are not as such to be found in the absolute. Contrariwise, the world does

not differ from the absolute, being merely a modification of it.

All this is in substantial agreement with Rāmānuja's own position. But there is a difference. While for him too the absolute is one and also many, its oneness is not quite like that of Bhāskara. It is rather like that of a system *whose unity is a unity in and through differences.*

VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA OR *RĀMĀNUJA'S THEORY OF VEDĀNTA*

The Bhedābheda theory, as we have seen, holds that identity and difference are equally real. Ultimate reality or Brahman *as cause is one and identical, as effect it is* many and different. Rāmānuja is critical of this view, pointing out that unity and difference cannot be both separately real, nor affirmed of one and the same thing. The same ultimate reality cannot simultaneously express itself in two modes of being, the one identical and the other different. As already said, pure identity, no less than pure difference, is a mere abstraction without reality. Unity or identity, he insists, is always qualified by difference. "Difference as such has no reality except as it modifies or determines the identical subject to which it refers."[80] Re*jecting, therefore, the theory of identity-in-difference,* Rāmānuja substitutes for it the theory of "identity in and through and because of difference."[81] In his view, *it is* absurd to suppose that the absolute really suffers bondage or enjoys liberation. The personality of the absolute is always permanent, but the body of this absolute undergoes change. This body is made up of individual souls and matter. Rāmānuja's metaphysics is therefore called *Viśistādvaita* or non-dualism qualified by difference.

> The absolute is an organic unity, an identity which is qualified by diversity. It is a concrete whole (*viśista*) *which consists of the inter-related and inter-dependent*

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80. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, "2nd ed. revised", (London : George Allen & Unwin, Ltd, 1929), Vol. II p. 489.

81. *Ibid*, p. 489.

subordinate elements which are called *'viśesaṇas'* and the immanent and controlling spirit which is called *'viśesa'*. Unity means realization of being a vital member of this organic whole.[82]

BOWNE'S PLACE IN WESTERN IDEALISM

HIS RELATION TO LEIBNIZ

At the head of this inquiry here Leibniz must be placed, for in his work on metaphysics Bowne says that it was Leibniz who furnished the starting point for his own inquiry.[83] The sense in which Leibniz sets the stage for Bowne becomes apparent at once when it is recalled that for the German thinker reality consists of monads. The monads are indivisible, without extension and without parts. They are active, and are identified by Leibniz with selves. Each monad differs from the other, and all undergo change. As selves they retain their identity at the same time they change. Further, the monads have no external connection with one another, yet there is a connection or what Leibniz calls a pre-established harmony between them. Each monad reflects the universe from its own point of view, but while doing this it is perfectly in accord with every other monad. Such harmony, since it is not the result of interaction or inter-communication between monads, must be ascribed to a harmonizer, a supreme self, who is God. It is therefore possible for Leibniz to say :

> But in simple substances the influence of one monad upon another is only ideal, and it can have its effect only through the mediation of God, insofar as in the ideas of God any monad rightly claims that God, in regulating the others from the beginning of things, should have regard to it. For since one created monad cannot have any physical influence upon the inner being of another, it is only by this means that the one can be dependent upon the other.[84]

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82. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 497.

83 Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1882), p. vii.

84 G. W. Leibniz, *The Monadology*, trans. by Robert Latta, (London. Oxford University Press, 1898), p 246.

Bowne develops a theory of coordination which is not entirely unlike Leibniz's pre-established harmony. So Bowne writes:

> Interaction is possible in a manifold only as the members of the manifold are dependent upon some unitary being, which either coordinates and mediates their interactions, or of which they are but phases or modifications.[85]

Further, as in Leibniz, so in Bowne, reality consists of individual selves whose chief characteristics are freedom, activity and independence, and all selves are comprehended by God, the Supreme Self. God is the source of their internal actions. While it is the case that there are differences between Bowne's theory of coordination and Leibniz's pre-established harmony, just as there are differences between the monads of the one and the selves of the other, yet the two thinkers agree in ascribing all interactions to God. So Bowne takes over Leibniz's spiritual pluralism of individual selves each possessing a certain completeness, perfection, and sufficiency, which makes in Leibniz's words, "the sources of their internal activities."[86] And Leibniz would no doubt readily understand Bowne's words when he writes:

> If the interaction of independent things were simply mysterious, there would be no reason for rejecting it; but since it involves contradiction, we must declare that all interaction between the many is really an immanent action in the one. How this action takes place, whether with free intelligence or with blind necessity we do not decide at present. It is enough to have shown that the ultimate pluralism of spontaneous thought must be exchanged for a basal monism; and the unity thus reached is not the unity of a logical universal, nor of any ideal classification of any kind, but the essential substantial unity of a being which alone is self-existent and in which all things have their being.[87]

85. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p. 128
86 G. W. Leibniz, *The Monadology*, p 229.
87. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p 130

BOWNE'S RELATION TO BERKELEY

Bowne describes his metaphysical system as Kantianized Berkeleianism.[88] Certainly his debt to the English thinker is great. It stems especially from Berkeley's view of reality as consisting of immaterial substances, that is to say, spirits, human as well as divine spirits. To Berkeley "a spirit is one simple, undivided, active being: as it perceives ideas it is called the understanding and as it produces or otherwise operates about them it is called the will."[89] The being of things lies in their being perceived, for *esse* is *percipi*, so that the notion of an unperceived thing is a contradiction in terms. What then happens to things when they go unperceived? The answer is that they continue to be perceived by God in whose mind they have a continuous existence. But the important thing for Bowne is not Berkeley's immaterialism (if such it is), but his emphasis upon the activity of spirits. Indeed it is just this activity that is the proof for Berkeley of the existence of spirits, and their reality is proportionate to the degree of their activity so that the supreme reality is God, who is pure activity. The dynamic character of spirits stands in contrast to the purely passive character of ideas. Ideas are inert and fleeting, subsisting not in themselves, but only in minds or spiritual substances. Given the dependent and passive character of ideas, it is of course a mistake to suppose that ideas cause each other. The connection between them stems from God, and the laws of nature are nothing but the excitement in the mind by God of these ideas in a regular and constant order.

With regard to Bowne's relation to Berkeley, it should be pointed out at once, that insofar as the latter's idealism is based partly upon epistemological considerations, in particular upon the egocentric predicament, Bowne parts company from him For, in Bowne's view, no tenable

88 *Ibid*, p 423.

89 George Berkeley, "edited by" A A. Luce and T E Jessop, Vol II (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd), p. 52.

idealism can be based upon such considerations. On the contrary, it must be based not merely upon the knowing process but also upon analysis of the object known. In this respect his position differs somewhat from that of Berkeley. It affirms, in realistic fashion, the existence of an objective order independent of the knower. Nevertheless Bowne insists at the same time that this order has a phenomenal reality and exists only in and for and through a supreme intelligence, which is God.

In common with Berkeley, Bowne holds that the distinctive mark of being consists in some power of action, that to be is to be a cause. For us things exist by virtue of their activity whereby they appear as agents in a system. So Bowne categorically asserts that being is not just inert substance, but activity first and last. The rule or law according to which a thing acts, represents to our thought the nature of the thing. But he insists equally that the thing must remain identical with itself in the midst of all its changes. Such identity in diversity, permanence in change is to be found in personality alone. Here, if Bowne does not contradict Berkeley, he certainly goes beyond him. Yet one of the seeds of Bowne's thought is certainly to be found in Berkeley's notion of activity of spirit.

Further, the two thinkers stand for a monistic view of the world, the monism based upon God as the ultimate source of order in the world. God is the great coordinator. But to a greater extent than Berkeley, Bowne assigns an autonomy to individual spirits, which, however, is not incompatible, he feels, with making God their ultimate source. Thus he writes

> In calling it the infinite, we do not mean that it excludes the coexistence of the finite, but only that it is the self-sufficient source of the finite. In calling it the absolute, we do not exclude it from all relation but deny only external restriction and determination. In calling it the world ground, we do not think of a spatial support, and still less of a raw material out of which things are made, but rather of that basal causality by which the world is produced and maintained. Every-

thing else has its cause and reason in this being. Whatever is true or rational or real in the universe must be traced to this being as its source and determining agent.[90]

He quickly adds that:

> On all these accounts we must hold the impersonal is possible only as dependent phenomenon, or process of an energy not its own. Only selfhood serves to mark off the finite as substantial reality, and to give it any ontological otherness to the infinite. Apart from this, there is essentially nothing but the infinite and its manifold activities.[91]

BOWNE'S RELATION TO KANT

It is a measure of Bowne's indebtedness to Kant that the categories of knowledge are almost the same for him as for the German thinker. To both men, categories are immanent mental principles which order experience and make it possible. For Kant, as Bowne writes, "experience is possible only through a certain constitutive mental activity according to principles immanent in the understanding."[92] This is also Bowne's own position, so that for him, too, the raw materials of the sensibility, which are not intelligible of themselves, can be organized into a rational world of experience and knowledge only through the ordering capacity and interpreting function of mind itself. Examples of this ordering capacity are time and space, which are forms impressed by the mind upon experience. Another is the category of causality without which events would be groundless and experience would fall asunder into chaos. So for Bowne as for Kant, it is only by means of forms and categories of the mind that we reach intelligible objects. But Bowne believes that the Kantian categories need to be completed by a higher category, namely, purpose, or the elevation of causality. And such causality

90. Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed", p. 93.
91. *Ibid.*, p 99
92. Borden P Bowne, *Personalism*, (Boston : Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1908), p 55.

is only to be found in a self-active, self-determining person. It is this category of the self-determining person that Bowne sets up as the ultimate basis of all understanding and explanation. But it is not only in the emphasis that he places upon the self that Bowne differs from Kant. He rejects the skeptical conclusions of Kant and affirms the possibility of metaphysics.

BOWNE'S RELATION TO HEGEL

Bowne aptly describes Hegelianism as a form of impersonalism in which all concrete reality, including intelligence, is generated by some logical process from an ultimate, impersonal reality. To Bowne, idealism of this impersonal sort, although, in origin, antipodal to naturalism, yet in outcome is often identical with naturalism, and hence a perennial source of atheistic reasoning.[93] In impersonal idealism "the individual" Bowne writes, "is merged in the class term, and this soon passes for the universal and all embracing Being."[94] Whereas for Bowne the finite self is a metaphysically discrete unit with a high degree of impenetrability, for Hegel it eventually becomes involved in the category of necessity which makes all reality one self-contained and complete experience, wherein finite persons are only model expressions of one self-realizing absolute mind.

Yet if the eventual outcome of the Hegelian system is the disappearance of the self, it is still true to say that Hegel's account, for example in his *Philosophy of Right,* of the process leading to selfhood is full of instructions for the personalist and that Bowne was not unaware of the fact What Hegel has written of the character of mind is in accord with what Bowne has written of the character of the self.

93. Borden P. Bowne, *Personalism*, pp. 218-219

94. Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, (New York: Amercan Book Company, 1897), p. 247.

> The aim of mind, (says Hegel), is to realize itself in its world; mind is not lost in this other, rather it preserves and realizes itself there, stamps its own inward nature on the other, giving the latter a mode of being agreeable to the nature of mind, and thus by the sublation of the other of definite actual difference, attains concrete explicit being and definite self-revelation. In this way what mind reveals in the other is only itself, its proper nature.[95]

Again, in agreement with Hegel, Bowne emphasizes that reality is rational; for him too, what is real is rational and what is rational is real,[96] so that reality is in some way an organic whole. And like Hegel further, he holds that all reality must be viewed as conscious experience. Where he differs from Hegel is in his view of the status of persons in reality. To him reality is always a self or person. Whereas for an impersonal idealist like Hegel the person is explained in terms of the categories, for a personalist like Bowne the categories are explained in terms of personality. It is no wonder, therefore, that Bowne takes exception to Hegel's treatment of particular selves. Hegel, he feels, empties the particular self of its uniqueness in such a way as to make it relatively worthless. Whether rightly or wrongly, he also charges Hegel with failing to do justice to the volitional and cognitive aspects of human experience.[97]

BOWNE'S RELATION TO HERBART

If Leibniz provided the starting point of Bowne's metaphysics, it was Herbart who, as Bowne acknowledges, supplied its method[98] Now Herbart holds that the task of metaphysics is to bring experience under the law of non-

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95. Quoted by Hugh Adam Reyburn, *The Ethical Theory of Hegel*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), p 89.

96. *Ibid*, p 54 cf Borden P Bowne, *Studies in Theism*, (New York, Phillips and Hunt, 1879), pp 117-118

Note It is to be pointed out however that reality is not limited to human reason, it comprises the whole of experience.

97. Borden P. Bowne, *Personalism*, p 263

98 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p vii.

contradiction and so render it consistent and comprehensible And the method he elaborates to this end is one which he calls the method of relations Philosophy begins with the general concepts of experience, and with the help of *formal* logic discovers the inconsistencies in them, which it is the enterprise of philosophy to resolve, for Herbart holds that nothing can be real that is *contradictory* Accordingly he places the principle of identity at the basis of his theory of reality Reality consists of a variety of "reals", each simple, changeless and constant Further, these "reals" are absolute, indivisible, not extended in space or in time Unchangeable themselves, they enter into different relations, and it is the relations not the reals, that change Change thus belongs to the contradictory world of appearances, and is seen for what it is when the "method of relations" is applied to it

Without accepting Herbart's rationalistic metaphysics, Bowne adopts the rationalistic method underlying it For him, too, philosophy is above all, a rational undertaking the logical clarification of conceptions[99] The philosophical ideal is, he says,

> a rational and systematic comprehension of reality or, since experience is the fundamental fact in all theorizing, and since reality can be known only in experience in the largest sense of that word, we may say that philosophy aims at a rational and systematic comprehension and interpretation of experience[100]

In Herbart's system, metaphysics is divided into methodology or the doctrine of principles and method, into being, under which comes change, into synchology, which deals with the constant, and into eidology or the study of the phenomena Philosophy and psychology are looked upon as applications of general metaphysics, and

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99 Friedrich Ueberweg *A History of Philosohpy* 2 Vols Trans from the 4th German editon edited by George S Morris (New York C Scribner and Company 1872 1874) Vol II p 268

100 Borden P Bowne *Theory of Thought and Knowledge,* p 3

united with it.[101] Bowne's own system follows a similar scheme and procedure. Of his categorical scheme he writes:

> There are certain general conceptions which make up at once the framework of knowledge and the framework of existence. Such are the categories of being and cause, change and identity, space and time; and our knowledge of particular things will depend on the conception we form of these basal categories.[102]

Much in the spirit of Herbart, Bowne follows up the initial task of reconstruction and correcting these common sense categories by developing a critical and coherent view of the concepts of experience.

Herbart rejects the old faculty psychology, as does Bowne. But Herbart's attempt to explain all psychic life mechanically in terms of movement of ideas, of action and reaction, and his reduction of mental life to a mere complication of ideas and feelings, together with his view of striving and impulses as modified ideas, were all largely rejected by Bowne. No less unsympathetic to Bowne was Herbart's notion that the entire content of the mind could be brought under fixed laws and that all psychical processes are capable of mathematical determination.[103] Herbart's determinism reduces the ego from a primordial principle to a product, while Bowne considers the self as a metaphysical first principle.

BOWNE'S RELATION TO LOTZE

We have seen that the starting point of Bowne's metaphysics is in Leibniz and that its method derives from Herbart His conclusions he says,

> are essentially those of Lotze I have reached them, for the most part, by strictly independent research;

101 Carroll Dewitt Hildebrand, "Borden P. Bowne's Teaching Concerning The Speculative Significance of Freedam" (Unpublished PH D Dissertation, Dept of Philosophy, Boston University, 1929), p 69

102 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, rev. ed, p. 1.

103 *Ibid*, p 383

> but, so far as their character is concerned, there would be no great misrepresentation *in calling them* Lotzean.[104]

And the fact is that Bowne's conception of reality and the self are not very different from Lotze's conception of these things. Lotze regards all that is finite as being the action of the Infinite. He writes:

> Real beings are those of his actions which the Infinite permanently maintains as centres of out-and-in-going effects that are susceptible of acting and of being affected; and, indeed, their reality, that is, the relative independence which belongs to them, consists, not in Being outside the Infinite, for such a Being no definition could make clear, but only in this, that they as spiritual elements have Being for self. This Being for self is the essential factor in that which we, in a formally unsatisfactory way, designate as Being outside the Infinite.[105]

Thus for Lotze, souls or individual selves have at least a relatively independent existence; they possess a status apart from the Infinite. *Not that the individuality of self-hood* is owing to detachment from the Infinite, but rather that "it is so far as something is an object to itself, relates itself to itself, distinguishes itself from something else, that by this act of its own it detaches itself from the Infinite."[106] In *his view it is only "things without self and without consciousness"*[107] that are fully immanent in God.

Further, in Lotze, so in Bowne, the mark of being is in some power of action. To both thinkers, being and action are inseparable; in the words of Bowne "to be is to act."[108] The truly real must not only have the capacity to act and to be acted upon, that is, to change, but to remain the same in all change. But where do we find such permanence in

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104. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p. vii.

105. Herman Lotze, *Outlines of Metaphysics*, trans. and ed. by George T. Ladd, (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1886), p. 229.

106. Herman Lotze, *Metaphysics*, trans. and ed. by Bernard Bosanquet, (London: The Clarendon Press. 1887), Vol. I, p. 122

107. *Ibid*, p. 227.

108. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p 28.

change? In ourselves is Lotze's answer. Only in the soul do we find unity and variety, persistence in change. The self, then, is the type of reality. All else is to be interpreted by analogy to what we experience in our inner life. Space, time, and the rest are not metaphysical realities, or things-in-themselves, but products in the last analysis of mental activity. In this way, with the self or soul as the central feature of his metaphysics, Lotze sought to reconcile monism and pluralism, mechanism and teleology, realism and idealism. The result, as he himself calls it, is teleogical idealism. The affinities of Bowne with all this should by now be obvious. In addition to the purely theoretical arguments for this position, Lotze, and Bowne after him, adduce also practical or ethical considerations. In fact the metaphysics of both thinkers is rooted in ethics. Our deepest natures demand a reality that is absolutely good and we cannot believe that the universe is indifferent to our highest aspirations.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Like all other philosophers, Rāmānuja, living in the eleventh century, and Bowne in the nineteenth, had predecessors whose work influenced them, whether positively or negatively. Thus as against the view of Śaṅkara that Brahman alone is real, Rāmānuja emphasizes the reality of the world and of selves and of God as their creator. Deny the reality of the world, he argues, and you deny the reality of experience. For Rāmānuja, further, the self has freedom, so that unlike Śaṅkara he views salvation as consisting not in absorption of the individual in the Absolute, but in fellowship with the Absolute.

In agreement with the Jaina system, Rāmânuja holds that reality is not one but many, or rather one in many, an identity in the midst of diversity. Reality cannot be understood from any one point of view, but only synoptically, as the Jainas rightly insist. Affirmation of one point of view against all others yields only a partial picture. In common with the Jaina system, Rāmânuja adopts the theory

of *Karma*. The soul is born and reborn until it reaches the stage of perfection.

As for Rāmānuja's links with the *Buddhistic* school of subjective idealism, it consists in his conception of ultimate reality as being of the nature of consciousness or mind. The *Yogācāra* school of Buddhism also influenced Rāmānuja in whose system individual selves play a role conformable to that of the potential selves in *Yogācāra*. For Rāmānuja the selves exist as potentialities in Brahman, yet when once created have an independent status. Not only do selves exist as potentialities, so likewise does the material world. And thus holding to the reality of both, Rāmānuja falls in line with the *Śankhya* system, although as a theist, he insists that self and matter are comprehended in God. As a means of concentrating upon the infinite self, Rāmānuja accepts the disciplinary practice recommended by the Yoga system.

But it is with various aspects of system of *Vedāntic* thought other than his own that Rāmānuja stands in closest relation. In common with these systems he rejects the view that the world is a mere product of material elements which combine to form objects, at the same time that, like all schools of *Vedānta* he affirms the existence as well as importance of the external world. Unlike *advaita Vedānta*, Rāmānuja therefore considers knowledge of the external world to be real knowledge.

No less than Rāmānuja, Bowne also has predecessors. First of all there is Leibniz whose theory of monads undoubtedly influenced Bowne to make selves the chief building blocks of the universe. Like those of Leibniz's rational monads which are self-conscious and active, Bowne's selves are free, active and relatively independent, at the same time that they are under the control of God, the Supreme Self, whom Bowne conceives as the source of their interactions. Next there is Berkeley in agreement with whom Bowne holds that the distinctive mark of being consists in some power of action. For both thinkers, the final reality

is self-conscious, active, spirit. The particular view Bowne takes of this activity owes much to Kant. For the one, as for the other, the mind is constitutive of experience, indeed the pre-condition of all experience whatever. Less influenced by Hegel than by Kant, and then more negatively than positively, Bowne's debt to Hegel is none the less unmistakable. Opposed as he is to the impersonalism of Hegel, he is yet in accord with Hegel's account of the development of the self. He is somewhat in accord also with Hegel's dictum that reality is rational. This brings us to Herbart's influence upon Bowne. For Herbart, too, reality is nothing if not intelligible, and his "method of relations", accepted by Bowne, is designed to overcome the inconsistencies and incoherences of phenomenal experience. In the view of both thinkers the task of philosophy is the rational and systematic comprehension of reality, and there is an analogy between Bowne's selves and Herbart's "reals". Lastly, among Bowne's predecessors, there is Lotze with whom he has much in common. Together they take much the same view of the nature of being as activity, and the selves as the building blocks of reality.

It is interesting, as well as instructive, to observe that there is a parallelism between Rāmānuja's and Bowne's relations to their respective predecessors. Just as both thinkers are out of sympathy with all abstract identities and all undifferentiated absolutes, so their borrowings from the past are of those ideas and conceptions which leave room for emphasis upon the world and upon the selves in it, both viewed as real creations of God or Brahman.

CHAPTER II

REASON AND EXPERIENCE : METHOD AND CRITERION IN THE THOUGHT OF RĀMĀNUJA AND BOWNE

The subject matter of philosophy is of such complexity, manysidedness, and diversity that the problem of method is one that the philosopher can hardly avoid. How can the multifarious data of philosophy be systematized ? How can their inter-relationships be ascertained ? What starting-points are possible ? Is one more fruitful than another ? Philosophers have long pondered these matters, though it cannot be said that they have arrived at any unanimity with regard to them. But the types of method they have recommended can be roughly classified, as Professor Brightman classifies them, into the rationalistic, the experimental, the analytic, the Kantian, the dialectical, the romantic, and synoptic. It is the latter method which we wish here to consider in a general way before passing on to Rāmānuja and Bowne who employ this method. Our debt to Professor Brightman in this connection will be obvious.

The term synopsis appears in Plato and is used by him to describe the attempt to grasp things in one comprehensive view. To Plato, it was clear that so long as the special sciences were left separate and distinct, we could not be said to have knowledge, nor have fulfilled the aims of education. No one in modern times has expatiated upon the synoptic attitude more illuminatingly than Professor Brightman. In his view synopsis is the characteristic method of philosophy. "It means," he writes, " the viewing of any object or complex of objects as a whole."[1] And he

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1 *Edgar S Brightman, An Introduction to Philosohpy,* "revised", (New York : Henry Holt and Company, 1951), p 39

declares further that the synoptic method presupposes the methods mentioned above, and keeps their results constantly in view. In synoptic reasoning "the mind does more than review the separate facts of deduction, analysis and synthesis, experiment, dialectic and feeling."[2] On the contrary, "knowing these facts, it sees them together and sees also the qualities of the object as a whole, which the other methods tend to omit, underestimate, or merely take for granted."[3] While keenly alive to the parts and their relations, the practitioner of the synoptic method is aware that the whole is more than its parts, and cannot be truly understood merely by adding the parts together. The synoptic method does not renounce analysis, but it refuses to stop at analysis. At the same time it is important to distinguish the synoptic from the synthetic method. The two are not coterminous

> Synthesis usually refers to a mere putting together of parts which first existed separately, as in a synthetic diamond, whereas synopsis, although including synthesis, also includes a search both for properties of a whole that could not exist separately, and for parts which could not exist as such in separation from the whole—such as the ideas and feelings of a mind, which cannot be separated from the mind in which they exist and transferred to another mind.[4]

Always the synoptic method starts with some given datum of experience, applies thought and reasoning to the analysis of this datum, and proceeds by testing each stage in the analysis by reference to the original datum as a whole

In an illuminating chapter which he has contributed to Professor Brightman's posthumous work on metaphysics, Professor Bertocci speaks of the personalistic use of synopsis. The datum with which personalism starts and which it seeks to interpret is that given in the immediate initial experience of the present. For both Brightman and Bertocci

2 Edgar S Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p 39
3 *Ibid*, p 39
4 *Ibid*, p 40

this is the surest point of departure Every attempt must be *made to do justice to this experience in all its complexity* Whatever its aspects, whether logical, sensory, emotional, volitional or valuational, none of them must be overlooked Nor must one phase of the experience be given priority, at least to begin with, to any other phase, as a *means to the understanding of reality* The *important thing* is not to fall into the error of allowing one phase to speak for the whole of reality The underlying assumption of the synoptically minded personalist is that we proceed most circumspectly and without relinquishing the demand for *accuracy only when we trust our experience as a whole* Nothing less than this can form the basis for a fruitful method in philosophy Starting with the immediate initial experience of the present and applying the synoptic method to it, the personalist is free to relinquish his tentative assumption that all the parts of an experience are on an equal footing, if further examination reveals that some parts are more important or trustworthy than others But to begin with "faith in the whole" is preferable to any alternative procedure, precisely because it does not *ab initio* preclude the possibility, as investigation develops, that it itself is false[5]

We may follow Professor Bertocci still further In his *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion,* he dwells upon the notion of what he calls "growing empirical coherence" Such coherence is not just logical consistency It is not the rationalistic coherence of a Bradley, for example Empirical coherence does not abandon reason, but asks us to enlarge its scope with the result that we move "from the conception of reason as logical consistency between ideas or concepts into the area of reason as *connecting between ideas and between ideas and experience*"[6] Professor Bertocci

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5 Professor Bertocci has been good enough to show me the manuscript of his chapter in Brightman s Metaphysics to be issued uder the title *Person and Reality,* by Ronald Press

6 Peter A Bertocci *An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion* (New York Prentice Hall 1951) p 57

goes on to say:

> Truth about existing things or events must be based on the claim that our ideas are not only consistent with other ideas but are consistent with the observations of events (or with the facts, as we say). This difference between strict logical consistency and actual connections in experience we shall now call *growing, empirical coherence.*[7]

It is coherence understood in this way that alone provides an adequate criterion of truth.

> *The life of reason, in this fuller sense, is now the constant interrelating of ideas, experiences, and events.* Like a general, reason puts together the reports which come from the front where ideas are being carried into action. Adjustment to our environment, to other people, and to whatever the structure of the world may be, calls for more than necessary logical thinking. We need to carry our logical conclusions into action for checking. In so doing, we find ourselves stimulated to develop other ideas whose logical consequences will once more guide us into further action
>
> It is this shuttling back and forth of ideas and experiences, with each being allowed to guide the other, that we have in mind when we use the words *growing, empirical coherence.* This full-blown process of thinking and this effort-for-coherence is what deserves the name of reason, for any other kind of reason connects only part of life rather than all that is available.[8]

Thus empirical coherence is at once a criterion of truth and a counsel to start with experience and employ reason upon it It calls for the development of hypothesis capable of relating all its parts when viewed together, that is, synoptically.

But can all the parts of experience be viewed together? Is not synopsis an impracticable ideal? Certainly, it is beyond the compass of any one man, or perhaps of all men together. Yet as a guide in the search for truth it is no

7 Peter A Bertocci, *An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion*, p 57

8 *Ibid*, p 58

mere empty ideal. Together with the criterion of growing empirical coherence, it forbids us to tamper with experience itself.

> In synoptic reason (writes Professor Brightman) .. the mind does more than to review the separate facts of deduction, analysis and synthesis, experiment, dialectic and feeling. Knowing these facts, it sees them together and sees also the qualities of the objects as a whole, which the other methods tend to omit, underestimate; or merely take for granted.[9]

No doubt it is true that synopsis is not always capable of precise and rigorous application. Its results are not susceptible of mathematical demonstration. Yet it represents an approach that has contributed greatly to the philosophical understanding of process, life and mind.[10]

With these preliminary remarks concerning the empirical criterion and the synoptic method, we turn to a consideration of how and to what extent they are used by Rāmānuja and Bowne.

METHOD OF RĀMĀNUJA

There are few explicit reflections in the works of Rāmānuja on either the method of philosophy or the criterion of truth ; so that we can only observe his actual procedure and attempt to make inferences from them with regard to these topics. The fact is that Rāmānuja pursues no one method, or perhaps it would be better to say that he employs a variety of approaches all of which add up to the synoptic. He is concerned above all with the character of reality as a whole and with elaborating a criterion capable of encompassing this wholeness. Accordingly, it may be said that, though Rāmānuja is no conscious practitioner of any one method, the various approaches he employs tend to cluster round this preoccupation with wholeness, and that if he employs one method more than another, it is the synoptic.

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9 Edgar S Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p 39.
10 *Ibid*, p. 41.

In what follows we shall attempt to sort out and characterize the methods as well as criteria used by Rāmānuja and to show that underlying them all is a synoptic attitude towards the problems with which he copes.

EMPIRICAL POINT OF DEPARTURE

Rāmānuja's point of departure in all his philosophical explorations is experience, and it is to experience that he returns. In whatever field, this experience first presents itself as indeterminate and unclear. But it becomes progressively more determinate as, through analysis and synthesis, we come to see the multiplicity of its relations to other experiences. Now, in Rāmānuja's view, central to all experience, is consciousness, and not merely consciousness, but a conscious self. From consciousness all proof stems and consciousness is the witness of all proof.

> If it is the nature of consciousness, says Rāmānuja, to be 'proof' [light, enlightenment], on the part of a person with regard to something, how can this consciousness, and the thing which is thus connected with the person, be itself conscious of itself? To explain: the essential character of consciousness or knowledge is that by its very existence it renders things capable of becoming objects, to its own substrate of thought and speech.[11]

What Rāmānuja appears to be emphasizing here is that the most inductively certain of all things is personal consciousness. It is the first indubitable datum of experience. He writes:

> This consciousness . . . is a particular attribute belonging to a conscious self and related to an object: as such it is known to everyone on the testimony of his own self—as appears from ordinary judgments such as 'I know the jar', 'I understand this matter', 'I am conscious of (the presence of) this piece of cloth.' That such is the essential nature of consciousness you yourself admit; for you have proved thereby its self-luminousness Of this consciousness which thus clearly pre-

11 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, (Sacred Books of the East Series Vol 48), p 56

> sents itself as the attribute of an agent, and as related to an object, it would be difficult to prove indeed that at the same time it is itself the agent; as difficult as it would be to prove that the object of action is the agent.[12]

While what we have here is an analysis of the nature of self-experience, it is an analysis that implies the use of a method that starts with experience and will employ an experimental criterion.

Deduction

Rāmānuja turns next to an analysis of what is involved in the experience which reveals the self as a primary datum He will resort here to deductive processes of reasoning, but always with an eye to the deliverance of experience. Now he believes it is a fair inference from the facts that the subject of consciousness, unlike consciousness which is its attribute, is characterized by permanency.

> The subject of consciousness (he writes) is permanent (constant), while its attribute, i.e., consciousness, not differing herein from joy, grief, and the like, rises, persists for some time, and then comes to an end.[13]

The fact to which Rāmānuja appeals in support of his inference concerning the permanency of the self is the fact of recognition: 'This very same thing was formerly apprehended by me' But permanency cannot be postulated of consciousness.

> The non-permanency of consciousness, on the other hand, is proved by thought expressing itself in the following forms: 'I know at present', 'I knew at a time', 'I, the knowing subject, no longer have knowledge of this thing'.[14]

Rāmānuja continues,

> How then should consciousness and the conscious subject be one? If consciousness which changes every

12 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 56.
13 *Ibid*, p. 56.
14. *Ibid*, p 57.

> moment were admitted to constitute the conscious subject, it would be impossible for us to recognize the thing seen today as the one we saw yesterday; for what has been perceived by one cannot be recognized by another. And even if consciousness were identified with the conscious subject and acknowledged as permanent, this would no better account for the fact of recognition. For recognition implies a conscious subject persisting from the earlier to the later moment, and not merely consciousness. Its expression is, 'I myself perceived this thing on a former occasion.'[15]

In so far as this argument for the existence of a permanent self suggests anything with regard to the nature of Rāmānuja's method, it is that not only experience but deductive reasoning plays a role in it. Further, since Rāmānuja believes that a permanent self alone makes sense of our experience, he would seem to be appealing to empirical coherence as a criterion of truth.

Observation

In dealing with self and consciousness, as well as with other problems of philosophy, Rāmānuja appeals not only to experience and reason, but also to empirical observation. So, for example, he raises the question why it is we perceive a white shell, under certain conditions, as yellow. Is the yellow due to the shell or is some other factor involved? Rāmānuja writes about the question in the following vein:

> The case of the white shell being seen as yellow explains itself as follows. The visual rays issuing from the eye are in contact with the bile contained in the eye, and thereupon enter into conjunction with the shell; the result is that the whiteness belonging to the shell is overpowered by the yellowness of the bile, and hence not apprehended; the shell thus appears yellow, just as if it were gilted. The bile and its yellowness is, owing to its exceeding tenuity, not perceived by the bystanders; but thin though it be, it is apprehended by the person suffering from jaundice, to whom it is very near, in so far as it issues from his own eye, and

15 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 57.

> through the mediation of the visual rays, aided by the action of the impression produced on the mind by that apprehension, it is apprehended even in the distant object, viz., the shell.[16]

To take another example, Rāmānuja explains why a firebrand, when swung around rapidly, appears as a fiery wheel.

> Its appearance as a fiery wheel explains itself through the circumstance that moving very rapidly it is in conjunction with all points of the circle described without our being able to apprehend the intervals. The case is analogous to that of the perception of a real wheel; but there is the difference that in the case of the wheel no intervals are apprehended, because there are none; while in the case of the firebrand none are apprehended owing to the rapidity of the movement.[17]

In both these instances Rāmānuja is seeking to confirm theory by reference to observation. In the case of the self, though as we have seen, Rāmānuja's case for its permanence rests not upon observation but upon reason. Permanence needs to be postulated, for if there were no permanent self, what happens in experience would be unintelligible.

Logical Devices

In addition to his use of experience, reason and observation, Rāmānuja resorts to certain logical devices, though not merely logical, especially in his critique of Śaṅkara's philosophy of *Advaita* or non-dualism. For example, he takes up that philosopher's conception of *Māyā* (cosmic illusion or nescience), first stating the view which in dialectical fashion he will proceed to refute.

> According to the view of our opponent (Śaṅkara), this entire world, with all its endless distinctions of Ruler, creatures ruled, and so on, is, owing to a certain defect, fictitiously super-imposed upon the non-differenced, self-luminous Reality; and what constitutes that defect is beginningless Nescience, which invests the Reality, gives rise to manifold illusions, and cannot be

16. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 122
17. *Ibid*, p. 122.

> defined either as being or non-being. Such Nescience, he says, must necessarily be admitted, firstly on the ground of Scriptural texts, such as 'Hidden by what is untrue . . .' and secondly, because otherwise the oneness of the individual souls with Brahman—which is taught by texts such as 'Thou art that'—cannot be established. This Nescience is neither 'being' because in that case it could not be the object of erroneous cognition (*brahma*) and sublation (*bādha*) ; nor is it non-being, because in that case it could not be the object of apprehension and sublation. Hence orthodox philosophers declare that this Nescience falls under neither of these two opposite categories.[18]

Rāmānuja begins his refutation as follows:

> Now this theory of Nescience is altogether untenable. In the first place we ask, 'What is the substrate of this Nescience which gives rise to the great error of plurality of existence?' You cannot reply 'the individual soul'; for the individual soul itself exists in so far only as it is fictitiously imagined through Nescience. Nor can you say 'Brahman'; for Brahman is nothing but self-luminous intelligence, and hence contradictory in nature to Nescience, which is avowedly sublated by knowledge.[19]

Fairly straightforward until now, Rāmānuja's refutation assumes as it unfolds a markedly dialectical character. He admits one of Śaṅkara's arguments in order to refute the others The argument is that the essential nature of Brahman is knowledge.

> The highest Brahman has knowledge for its essential nature; if Nescience, which is essentially false and to be terminated by knowledge, invests Brahman, who then will be strong enough to put an end to it.[20]
>
> What puts an end to Nescience is the knowledge that Brahman is pure knowledge!—Not so, for that knowledge also is, like Brahman, of the nature of light, and hence has no power to put an end to Nescience.—And if there exists the knowledge that Brahman is

18 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, pp 102-103
19 *Ibid*, p 103
20 *Ibid*, p 103

> knowledge, then Brahman is an object of knowledge, and that, according to your own teaching, implies that Brahman is not of the nature of consciousness.[21]

What we have here, it is true, touches upon criteriology rather than method, though it bears upon method as well. Rāmānuja *is at least suggesting a criterion of empirical* coherence. He is trying to show that a certain hypothesis is self-contradictory, and not only self-contradictory but inconsistent with experience.

Still another example of this manner of argumentation is Rāmānuja's consideration of the question whether Brahman has a body or not. The argument is in the form of a dialogue between an Opponent (Śaṅkarite) who denies *that Brahman has a body and a Questioner (Rāmānuja)* who takes the opposite position. The debate proceeds as follows:

> Questioner: Let us put some questions to the opponent: In making the universe did *Īśvara* (God) work in a body or without a body?
>
> Opponent: Without a body.
>
> Questioner: He could not have done so; for we have not seen anyone without a body doing anything. Can you give an instance?
>
> Opponent: An operation of the mind takes place without the help of a body. It only requires the possession of the mind. Mind being eternal, *Īśvara* can therefore make the universe by mere willing.
>
> Questioner: Even mental operations are observed only in those invested with bodies. Though the mind is a permanent entity (which by the way we do not accept), the freed jīva, being devoid of a body, *does not give any indication of its operation.*
>
> Opponent: *Īśvara* worked in a body.
>
> Questioner: Was that body permanent or perishable?
>
> Opponent: It was permanent.
>
> Questioner: If so, a body, though made up of parts, need not be a product. The universe, though made *up of parts, might likewise be permanent, and the*

21. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

need for inferring the existence of a maker would not arise.

Opponent: The body was a perishable one.

Questioner: It must have been made; but the body by the exertion of which this body should be made was not then available.

Opponent: *Iśvara* was himself the cause.

Questioner: This cannot be in one without a body.

Opponent: He had a body other than that made on the completion of evolution.

Questioner: We will ask—how was that body made? This would lead to the assumption of a third body; then of a fourth body, and so on *ad infinitum*.[22]

It is in this manner, if not always explicitly in the dialogue form, that Rāmānuja develops some of the chief points in his own system of thought. And it is fair to say that the procedure is one in which the reasoning is based on experience.

The Dialectic of Thought

Underlying Rāmānuja's approach, especially in its synoptic aspects, is a theory of thought which may be called dialectical. It bears some resemblance to Hegel's triadic movement, without the element of negation, or rather without the Hegelian emphasis upon negation. In Rāmānuja's view the progress of knowledge is from the vaguely determinate experience to the more and more determinate. This progress comes about as the subject-object relation becomes increasingly evident And this in turn involves the emergence of more and more relations, and hence greater and greater determination But it must not be imagined that the 'vaguely determinate', with which knowledge begins, does not already at the start evidence some degree of difference All consciousness implies difference, Rāmānuja insists

> All states of consciousness have for their object something that is marked by some difference, as appears

22 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, tr Divan Bahadur Sri Rāmānujachari, pp 121-122

in the case of judgments like 'I saw this'. And should a state of consciousness—although directly apprehended *as implying difference—be determined by some fallacious reasoning to be devoid of difference, this determination could be effected only by means of some special attributes additional to the quality of mere being; and owing to these special qualities on which the determination depends, that state of consciousness would clearly again be characterized by difference.*[23]

Even the most indeterminate experience involves some differentiation, though it may not be clearly discerned at once. Rāmānuja writes:

> Perception . . . with its two subdivisions of non-determinate (*nirvikalpaka*) and determinate (*savikalpaka*) perception—also cannot be a means of knowledge for things devoid of all difference. Determinate perception clearly has for its object things affected with difference; for it relates to that which is distinguished by generic difference, and so on. But also non-determinate perception has for its object only what is marked with difference; for it is on the basis of non-determinate perception that the object distinguished by generic character, and so on, is recognized in the act of determinate perception. Non-determinate perception is the apprehension of the object in so far as destitute of some differences but not of all difference.[24]

A differentiating factor is thus present in the object of knowledge from the beginning. But the sort of dialectic that Rāmānuja has in mind is not, like that of Hegel, simply the self-unfoldment of the Idea. To the Indian thinker finite idea and object are distinct and different. The relations which thought seeks to grasp come about through the immanent activity of Brahman who, if he is the relating principle of things, is however not one with them

Rāmānuja's Practical Method (Yoga)

Human nature consists not merely of reason but of feeling, and this fact must be taken into account in dealing with the problems of philosophy. In other words, there are

23. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, pp. 39-40
24. *Ibid*, p. 41.

practical as there are theoretical methods in philosophy, both of which are used by Rāmanuja

> He who wishes to attain Brahman (writes Rāmānuja) must acquire two kinds of knowledge an indirect one which springs from the study of the *Śastras* (Sacred Scriptures) and a direct one which springs from concentrated meditation (Yoga) [25]

Yoga tries to canvass and satisfy the emotional aspects of the self And Yoga itself is a method for controlling, disciplining and rationalizing the feelings, as Professor Radhakrishnan points out

> It is quite true that there are wrong feelings even as there are wrong cognitions It is also true that, in the lower level, feelings stand isolated even as cognitions do But as the cognitions are systematized, so are feelings transformed and disciplined, i e, rationalized [26]

This last sentence is an excellent characterization of both the method and criterion commonly employed by Ramanuja

Now the sort of concentration which it is the aim of Yoga to achieve presupposes a devotion to God, which devotion finds demonstrable forms of expression in the individual through love, charity, truthfulness, purity, composure, constant meditation, confidence, and sense of harmony While the supernatural powers associated with the different stages of the practice of Yoga are hardly reconcilable with the known laws of the physical and psychical sciences, it is not to be supposed that Yogic experiences have anything to do with magic It is a solidly founded method of self-realization as the experience of innumerable devotees, who are not charlatans, goes to show The mental concentration enjoined in the Yoga is a mode of meditation on Brahman, says Rāmānuja, and he goes on to state that by means of it the individual acquires a special capacity and power to dispel and overcome ignorance [27] It eventuates

25 Sri Ramanuja *Sri Bhashyam*, p 284
26 S Radhakrishnan *Indian Philosophy* p 675
27 Sri Ramanuja *Sri Bhashyam* p 116

in a mystical love which transcends the ordinary ethical, aesthetic and religious canons of human existence. The devotee feels the inner pulsations of the absolute self whereby he is filled with an ineffable joy.

All this is set forth by Rāmānuja, not as a method of philosophising, but rather as a way of finding reality. Yet it has a bearing on his method in so far as it reveals a reality the nature of which he seeks to define by reason conjoined with experience.

Wholeness or Synopsis as Method

Throughout Rāmānuja's various approaches to the problems of philosophy there is the concern with wholeness. Not that the whole can ever be known, at least not in its entirety, but it is only as a method furthers such knowledge that it can lay claim to any validity. We have seen that for Rāmānuja thought begins with the relatively indeterminate and progresses towards greater and greater determinateness and in this process becomes more and more embracing. From particulars we pass to class concepts, but class concepts are themselves inadequate wholes and we cannot rest in them. Indeed, they are a means to a richer knowledge of the individual, above all, the ultimate individual, who is God. God or Brahman is the whole and it is only through knowledge of Him, knowledge however imperfect, that we recognize the parts falling into an intelligible order. Rāmānuja writes:

> That highest person who is the ruler of all; . . . whose purposes come true; who possesses infinite auspicious qualities, such as knowledge, blessedness, and so on; . . . that from which these beings are born, that by which when born they live, that into which they enter at their death, try to know that: that is Brahman.[28]

It is only in terms of Brahman, the whole, "that all else is known."[29] The philosopher starts with the expe-

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28 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 156
29 *Ibid*, p 284

riences of individual selves, tries to account for all their features together, and tests his account at every stage by still further experiences In this way he comes to see the presence of a principle implicit in experience, criticized by logic yet transcending both This principle is God himself If our rational knowledge grasps God only imperfectly, intuition may succeed where rational knowledge fails Ramanuja's *Yogic* experience gives him what reason suggests

We are now in a position to assess more precisely the nature of synopsis as it appears in Ramanuja. And it must be said at once that it, together with the criterion he employs, is closer to the rationalistic mysticism, say of Spinoza, than to the empiricism of Bowne and Brightman To Ramanuja it is only in terms of the whole, that is Brahman that it is possible to know anything at all On the other hand the proponent of empirical coherence demands that reason develop hypotheses about experience, but never leave it It cannot be said that Ramanuja does this except inconstantly Yet he does do it on occasion, and our exposition we are frank to admit has made the most of this fact

THE METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF BOWNE S THOUGHT

As with Ramanuja so with Bowne, it is the regard for wholeness that dictates the character of his method, though we shall see that the latter's method is marked by a far more thorough-going empiricism Bowne is explicit about the synoptic approach as Ramanuja is not and our task of expounding Bowne, therefore, does not call for inferences from his actual procedure and words

The first thing that strikes us about Bowne in this connection is his distrust of any method that is merely logical any method that would dictate to experience Not that he leans towards any species of irrationalism quite the contrary but he is ready to harken to other deliverances

besides those of the logical intellect. We need, he says, to take into account all the facts, including, of course, those of the senses, before we proceed to make judgments about the nature of reality. In the following words Bowne formulates the empiricistic base of his philosophizing:

> What is reality? How can we answer this question otherwise than by opening our eyes and telling what we see? or by looking into experience and reporting what we find?[30]

But if we must start with experience, we soon find that we cannot rest there, even if we must constantly come back to it.

> At a very early date in the history of reflective thought, it became clear that the conceptions we spontaneously and unreflectingly form are not those in which we finally rest. If we attempt to rest in things as they appear, we find ourselves involved in all manner of difficulties; and thus we are compelled to revise our conceptions until we make them mutually consistent and adequate to the function they have to perform in our thought system. In this way arises the distinction between appearance and reality or between things as they appear and things as we must think of them; and thus, finally, the problem of metaphysics becomes a question for thought, and not one which can be answered by sense intuition.[31]

This passage taken by itself would, it is true, suggest mere logical coherence as a criterion, but taken in conjunction with the previous passage what we have is a demand that we start with experience as well as end with it.

So it is experience in all its aspects, and experience alone, that furnishes the data for any philosopher. For it is the facts of experience that pose the problems to the solution of which our theories are addressed. In a crucial passage Bowne writes: "We have no way of creating reality, and we also have no such *a priori* insight into its

30. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed.," p. 4.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

nature that we can tell in advance what reality must be."[32] *A-priorism* is thus ruled out. In characterizing his method as critical, rather than creative, Bowne is concerned to emphasize that his method is not rationalistic. He writes:

> Experience, as a whole, is our datum, and the question is, How must we think about reality on the basis of this experience as interpreted by thought? We take, then, everything as it seems to be, or as it reports itself, and make only such changes as are necessary to make our conceptions adequate and harmonious. The reasons for doubt and modification are to be sought entirely in the subject-matter, and not in the possibility of verbal doubt. This method allows reason its full rights, and it also saves the natural sense of reality, which can never be needlessly violated with impunity. We take the theory of things which is formed by spontaneous thought, and make it the text for a critical exegesis in the hope of making it adequate and consistent. The method is one of faith, and not of scepticism.[33]

We have already said that if Bowne begins with the data of experience, he does not end with them certainly as they are originally given. "We find ourselves," he says, "compelled to transcend them by giving them a rational interpretation."[34] As thought becomes reflective and self-conscious, that is, developing hypotheses to account for experience as a whole, it makes a discovery of the first moment. It finds that some elements of experience are given in sense-intuition and that others are given only in thought.[35] Now the rational interpretation of experience, of which Bowne speaks, is not something imposed upon experience, but arises out of it. As has already been said, its function is not creative but critical. Reality is not a function of thought, but thought a function of reality. The aim of method is not to tell how being exists or is made,

32. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed," p 6
33. *Ibid*, p. 6
34. *Ibid*, p. 5.
35. *Ibid*, p 7.

but rather how we shall think about it.[36] And here experience is our only guide.

> If we were trying to deduce the world from the absolute stand-point, we might take the high *a priori* road, but as our aim is only to rationalize and comprehend experience, we must begin with experience.[37]

We begin with experience, without partiality for this or that aspect of it, and the goal is such a progressive refinement of our conceptions as will abolish contradictions and achieve wholeness. Bowne's method here is the method of Herbart, as he himself says.[38] The method is aimed at the elaboration of conceptions, conceptions which, as first given in experience, are infected with contradiction. For example, there is the conception of inherence, which is the notion of a thing with several attributes, implying that one is many. Other examples are the conception of causality, of change, and of an ego regarded as the primary source of our manifold ideas. The task of metaphysics, for Bowne as for Herbart, is to bring experience under the law of non-contradiction and thus to render experience consistent and comprehensible. And it seeks to do this by what Herbart called the method of relations.[39] Finding ourselves obliged to reconstruct the concepts derived from experience, for the sake of greater empirical coherence, we seek out the necessary complementary conceptions through which the contradictions resident in the initial conceptions are resolved. This is the procedure adopted by Bowne throughout the development of his metaphysics, and we take up its closer study in the section that follows.

Reason and Method

In Bowne's words, "philosophy aims at a rational and systematic comprehension and interpretation of experience."[40] But what is the meaning of 'rational' here ? The

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36 *Ibid*, p. 9.
37. *Ibid*, p. 9.
38 Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, vii.
39 F. Uberweg, *History of Philosophy*, Vol. 2, p. 268.
40. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 3.

term rationalism has been used in a variety of contexts three of which are particularly noted by Bowne and criticized. First, the term may refer to the *a priori* method in philosophy following which the ultimate principles of reality are deduced from a few basic concepts, definitions and axioms. So, for example, Spinoza and Leibniz proceed by strict syllogistic formulae, by what Bowne calls "the method of rigor and vigor."[41] Can such a method be properly applied to the whole field of philosophy? Bowne's answer is no. The method pre-supposes that man is merely an intellect, whereas in fact he is a great deal more.[42] The other elements of human nature such as will, conscience, emotion and aspiration, cannot be brought under the dictation of the logical intellect alone, but must be related to each other and to sense experience.

The second context of rationalism, as Bowne makes out, is that in which it is used to refer to the activity of the mind, and as in the Kantian teaching. According to Kant, the mind's role in the process of knowledge and experience consists in organizing, in terms of its own rational principles, the sensuously given, and thus render it knowable. Without the mind's activity, experience would be nothing but a meaningless flux. Now, while Bowne is prepared to grant some measure of validity to the Kantian position, he cannot accept it in its entirety either as a method or a metaphysic; as a method because it is excessively onesided and as a metaphysic because of its subjectivistic implications.

In the third context, distinguished by Bowne, rationalism may be used to refer to the trustworthiness of the mind and to the intelligibility of the real world. Concerning the assumptions underlying this application, he writes:

> We assume . . . the essential truthfulness of nature, so that the indications of all clearly determined facts

41. Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed," p. 16.
42. Borden P. Bowne, *Theism*, (New York American Book Co, 1902), pp 17-18

> can be trusted. We assume, once more, that nature is not only essentially comprehensible, but that it is comprehensible by us; so that what our nature calls for to make the facts intelligible to us is necessary to the facts themselves. For, after all, our explanation of facts always consists in saying that if we may assume certain facts we can understand the actual facts. Thus back of the real universe of experience we construct an ideal universe of the intellect, and we understand the former through the latter.[43]

Here Bowne has begun to describe his own method and to indicate the respect in which it may be called rationalistic. It will be observed that the method is one in which reason develops hypotheses about experience. The method is rationalistic, (perhaps reasonable is a better word) in the sense that its chief operation and assumption is that the universe is intelligible, that it is an expression of mind, not of course of the human mind, but of the divine mind. And because it is an expression of the divine intelligence, it is possible to speak of the trustworthiness of the human mind, which is itself a creation of the divine mind. It is only by reference to the divine mind, further, that the true work of thought in relation to reality can be understood. To Bowne, as to Rāmānuja, thought is above all "an organic activity which unfolds from within, and can never be put together mechanically from without."[44]

> Persons on the sense plane, he adds, perpetually seek to build up thought from without by the mechanical juxtaposition and association of sense impressions . . . . This unprofitable, and sometimes pernicious, externalism can be overcome only by an insight into the activity and organic unity of thought itself. . Knowledge is no longer something originating outside of the mind, possibly in the nerves, and passed along ready-made into the mind; it is rather something built up by the mind within itself in accordance with principles *immanent in the mental nature.*[45]

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43. Borden P. Bowne, *Theism*, p. 19.

44. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. iii.

45. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, pp. iii-iv.

The bearing of all this upon philosophical method is that the model for such a method is not to be found in the procedures of the physical sciences It is to be found rather in the nature of intelligence itself

> Living, acting intelligence is the source of all truth and reality, and is its own and only standard And all the categories, abstract principles, instead of being the components of the mental life, are simply shadows of that life, and find in that life their only realization This may be called the transcendental empiricism[46]

In its methodological aspect the position Bowne characterizes as transcendental, by which he means critical, empiricism consists on the one hand of the strictest regard for experience and on the other of recognition of principles that go beyond experience, though they arise out of it Examine the world in the light of reason, he would contend, and you will find that the clue to its nature resides in the activity of reason itself, and you will find further than this activity points to a supreme reason He thus envisages a method for philosophy which is at once empirical but in no narrow or onesided sense and which makes the fullest use of reason It is a rationalistic method, if one will, but rationalistic without arrogance and not unmindful of its limitation to what is checked and checkable in experience as a whole It might better be called a method of reason

> Our earlier contention that knowledge arises in the mind only through its own activity remains unshaken and unshakeable, but if we try to explain knowledge in its essential nature, or to justify by anything beyond itself we soon find the task hopeless After theory has exhausted its resources, there are deeps in the problem of knowledge, which recall Jacobi's claim that all knowing involves revelation In any case knowledge must be its own standard, and in the deepest things we must be content with knowing not how we know, but that we know[47]

Such a confession is not in the usual rationalistic vein To Bowne intelligence is an ultimate datum, and what we

46 Borden P Bowne *Metaphysics* revised ed p 425
47 *Ibid* p 426

know about it we know only from experience. From the following passage it is clear that by intelligence Bowne means something more than logic. It is akin to Dewey's conception of it as activity operating in and upon experience.

> We explain the work of intelligence by tracing it to intelligence, but intelligence itself simply is. It accounts for everything else, but it accepts itself. When we seek to construe intelligence in any way we fall into illusion. Component factors, antecedent mechanisms, are fictions of unclear thought. When we come to intelligence we must stop in our regress and understand it as intelligence. Here our transcendental empiricism again appears. Intelligence has no means of understanding itself as product. It is the source of all products, and for knowledge of itself it must fall back on experience.[48]

We may say then that Bowne places the highest value upon reason, but reason anchored in experience, and thus guarded against the excesses of an *a priori* rationalism.

Logic and Method

Logic, of course, plays a role in Bowne's method, but he is keenly aware of the deficiencies of logic as such. Logic, he complains, merely attempts to prove the truth or falsity of propositions and thereby limits the area of experience It leaves out of account those extra-logical sectors of human life which are certainly as vital as those that fall within the compass of logical reasoning. What interests him most in logic is the judgment, which for him, as for Rāmānuja, is central. Bowne writes:

> Thought, as apprehending truth, exists only in the form of the judgment. The presence of ideas in consciousness, of their passage through it, is neither truth nor error, but only a mental event Truth or error emerges only when we reach the judgment. The fundamental conditions of the judgment, therefore, must be fundamental conditions of thought itself. These are three: the unity and identity of the thinking self, the

48. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed.", p. 428.

> law of identity and contradiction, and the fact of connection among the objects of thought The first is the condition of any rational consciousness whatever The second is the condition of our thoughts having any constant and consistent meaning The third refers to that objective connection which thought aims to reproduce, and without which thought loses all reference to truth . Or, without too great inaccuracy, they might be called respectively, the psychological, the logical, and the ontological condition of thought [49]

This classification of the fundamental conditions of the judgment, especially in its emphasis upon the identity and unity of the thinking self, parallels that of Rāmānuja

Consideration of the judgment takes Bowne as it takes Rāmānuja far beyond the bounds of mere logic, beyond the merely formal laws of identity, non-contradiction and excluded middle Besides leading both thinkers to emphasize the activity of the mind, it leads them to a consideration of freedom With regard to the latter Bowne writes

> It is clear that all investigation must assume the essential truth of our faculties If we allow that these in their normal working may lead us astray, there is an end of all faith in reason and knowledge But since, as a matter of fact, we often do go astray, the problem arises how to combine the assumption of the trustworthiness of our faculties with the recognition of actual and abundant error. Freedom is the only solution of the problem which does not wreck reason [50]

If we were not free to err, error would have no meaning, nor truth either Indeed freedom enters intimately into the structure of reason itself [51] Now reason supplies us with a standard, purely formal, it is true, of truth and falsehood, and

49 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 20

50 *Ibid*, p 239

51 *Ibid*, p 243

> The thought of a standard implies a power to control our thoughts, to compare them with the standard, to reserve our decision, to think twice, to go over the ground again and again, until the transparent order of reason has been reached.[52]

Lacking such a power, thoughts would simply come and go, some displaced by others, not because of any superior rationality, but because the new conditions have produced new conceptions.

Of course the freedom which is indispensable to thought is not a power to make things true or false at will.

> The rational connection of ideas and cosmic uniformities we can never make or unmake. If we have the premises we cannot change the conclusion. The laws of thought are secure from all tampering and overthrow. Yet though thus imperative, they do not of themselves secure obedience. If they did error would be impossible. Hence, in addition to laws of thought founded in the nature of rationality, there is needed an act of ratification and self-control in accordance with these laws. Only thus does reason become regnant in our thinking and only thus do we become properly rational beings.[53]

So what is needed for the adequate comprehension of reality is not only logic but free will, together with an adherence to experience in its variety and relatedness.

Not only does Bowne emphasize the impotence of bare logic, but he warns against the pitfall into which it might lead us, that which he calls the fallacy of the universal This fallacy consists, he says, "in mistaking class terms for things, and in identifying the processes of our classifying thought with the processes of reality."[54] It is a mistake to which the logician is particularly liable owing to his preoccupation with thought apart from a thinker. To Bowne, who takes a synoptic view, thought is not the whole of reality, but is that aspect of our experience under which the rest is so organized as to remove inconsistency and pro-

52. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 243

53 *Ibid*, pp. 243-244.

54 *Ibid*, p. 244.

duce greater harmony. By itself it is a mere abstraction, and Bowne strives always in his philosophy for the concrete.

> There is always something deeper than thought; it is the thinking living person. And there is something deeper in the person than formal thought; it is life and aspiration. Reality is not merely to be comprehended under logical forms; it is also to be lived and enjoyed. We have seen that the understanding gives only the form, and not the content of existence. Hence the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious nature, have always claimed to bring us nearer to the life of being and its true significance than the understanding can ever come. In the contemplation of the beautiful, in devotion to the good, and in the service and worship of the perfect, we enter into the inmost life of reality, and become one with the universe. It is the gravest oversight on the part of intellectualism to overlook all this, and seek to reduce man to understanding only.[55]

Here Bowne is speaking for an all-round view of reality and by implication for a method which does justice to experience in all its aspects. In speaking of "something deeper in the person than formal thought", Bowne recalls Rāmānuja, but with a difference. For the Indian thinker this recognition leads to the idea of mystical union, as it does not in Bowne. Further, it may be pointed out that Bowne's oneness with the universe is an oneness of purpose, whereas for Rāmānuja, this is the self realization of the individual as being inseparably connected with Brahman. This does not, however, involve the loss of individuality but it is not the same type of individuality as it is understood in the West.

Method and the Extra-Logical

We have just seen that for Bowne mind is not merely a logic-making apparatus but includes many other interests besides. He writes:

> The mind is not a disinterested logic machine, but a living organism, with manifold interests and tenden-

55. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, pp 529-530

> cies These outline its development and furnish the driving power[56]

Accordingly, any adequate method in philosophy must be so devised as to do justice to the extra-logical interests of the mind Among such interests are the moral and religious, the aesthetic and valuational Theorizing in these domains, and in all others, Bowne would probably agree, are inseparable from qualities of heart and will Otherwise they are simply logical exercises "There is an element," says Bowne, "of faith and volition latent in all our theorizing"[57] He goes on to say

> Where we cannot prove, we believe Where we cannot demonstrate, we choose sides This element of faith cannot be escaped in any field of thought, and without it the mind is helpless and dumb[58]

And Bowne might even have added explicitly that it cannot be escaped in the field of logic itself

The fact is that the mind, in its concrete and essential nature, is a unity of interests and feelings, with feeling as the motive force of mental life Indeed, for Bowne the subjective side of mental activity is of the first importance

> The whole mental life—springs out of feeling It *is extremely doubtful if a purely perceptive being with*-out any subjective interests, could attain to rationality, even if its physical existence were secured Indeed, it is demonstrable that our sentiments outline and control all mental development Before mental growth can begin, there must be an awakened interest, and when interest is awakened, the leaden chaos of sense-experience begins to take on intelligible forms The love of truth, which is the mainspring of science, is only one phase of religious feeling and worship Truth, as simple correspondence of thought with fact, cannot arouse enthusiasm *It has indeed a low value of utility*, but nothing on which a soul may live[59]

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56 Borden P Bowne, *Theism* p 22

57 Borden P Bowne *Philosophy of Theism*, (New York Harper & Brothers 1887), p iii

58 *Ibid*, p iv

59 Borden P Bowne *Studies in Theism*, (New York Phillips and Hunt, 1879), pp 65 66

Once more we observe Bowne attempting to do justice to all the facets of our experience, and not the least of these facets is feeling. And no method in philosophy, which overlooks this fact, can be satisfactory.

Again, it is not that Bowne is advocating an irrationalist position, either with regard to method or philosophy in general. He gives reason all due weight, but he is under no illusion that reason is a pass key to all of life's enigmas. Of two beliefs neither of which is demonstrable, we are justified in adopting that one which is the more life-enhancing. To this extent Bowne's method may be said to contain a pragmatic component. In any case, he is constantly appealing to experience. In his *Theism* he writes:

> The justification of the world must be found in experience rather than in speculation, in life rather than in the closet. If we find life, with its furnishings of hopes and aspirations, worth living, that must be the end of all discussion. If we find the things we most rejoice in and would least forget are the struggles, the conquests, the sacrifices we have made, there is no need for their further justification.[60]

All this is simply to say that some things are not matter for argument, but for experience Some problems, perhaps the deepest, are susceptible of only a practical solution. "In the cognitive world many practical convictions are so important that they are not left to reasoning, but are fixed for us in the spontaneous working of our intelligence"[61] This is true likewise in the moral world.

Yet it would be a mistake to suppose that if, for Bowne, no method is valid which emphasizes reason at the expense of feeling, that the two are opposed, or that feeling may not in its own way be revelatory of the nature of things.

The Synoptic Point of View

In all Bowne's thought upon method, it is experience

60 Borden P Bowne, *Theism*, p 282.
61. *Ibid*, p 283.

as a whole that is the underlying consideration. The scientific, logical, ideational and emotional need to be pooled together into one integral whole, for it is only thus that they can be seen in true perspective, and their validity and value judged. But this pooling together of partial experiences is not merely a process of juxtaposition, just as "a conception of all the parts of a watch in separation is not a conception of the watch."[62] External juxtaposition can never eventuate in the unitary conception of which we are in search. This unitary conception must at once embrace the whole without extinguishing the plurality of its elements. For, says Bowne, "there can be no true thought until the unity of the conception is distinguished into the plurality of its implications."[63] Hence in a truly synoptic manner, Bowne recommends a method which is analytic as well as synthetic. "Over against the plurality," he says, "we must affirm a unity; and equally over against the unity we must affirm a plurality. Analysis is as necessary as synthesis."[64]

Adopting the synoptic point of view towards experience, Bowne cannot rest in any partial conception, so that the driving force of his philosophy, as it is the clue to his method, is the ideal of wholeness. And if he achieves this ideal to any extent, it is not by the use of reason alone, but by an integration of all our faculties together.

CRITERION OF TRUTH

If the methods pursued by Rāmānuja and Bowne are best described as being synoptic in character, their theory of truth likewise emphasizes wholeness. At the same time, it should be pointed out that the Indian thinker's criterion of truth appears on the whole to be largely rationalistic, while Bowne's is empirical. Bowne would agree with Professor Bertocci's definition of truth "as the relevance

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62. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 21.

63. *Ibid*, p 22.

64. *Ibid*, p. 22.

of statements about reality to reality,"[65] meaning by reality "the permanent and ultimate thing(s) or being(s) which make up the world."[66] To both thinkers coherence and consistency are the marks of truth, 'coherence' being the important word for Bowne. For Professor Brightman has well pointed out, "coherence means inclusive systematic consistency, thus going far beyond 'mere' or 'rigorous' consistency".[67] And he adds that "wherever there is inconsistency there must be error,"[68] though consistency by itself is of course no proof of truth. Both Rāmānuja and Bowne would subscribe to this view. Further, they would agree that "the meaning of consistency is given with the very fact of intelligent consciousness."[69] As already suggested, consistency, at least in the ordinary sense of the term, is not enough. If it were, we could proceed to apply our test independently of experience. But this *a priori* road is barred, apart from all other considerations, by the very nature of the synoptic method for which experience is the touchstone.

What then is the place of consistency when we adopt a coherence criterion of truth? Professor Brightman speaks of 'systematic consistency.' Let us follow him a step further. He writes:

> If we are to meet the needs of truth as suggested by science and ordinary experience, then the test of truth, while requiring consistency, must also require (a) that all the facts of experience be considered, and (b) that propositions about these facts be related in an orderly and significant way; (a) refers to the inclusiveness, and (b) to the systematic character of the kind of consistency that we call coherence. This con-

65 Peter A. Bertocci, *An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion*, p 62.

66. *Ibid*, p 62.

67. Edgar S Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 63

68. *Ibid*, p 68.

69. *Ibid*, p 68.

> ception is evidently connected with the synoptic method.[70]

It is certainly so connected in Bowne, and also less steadily in Rāmānuja. In words that throw still further light on the connection, Professor Brightman says:

> By coherence is meant literally "sticking together". The coherence criterion looks beyond the mere self-consistency of propositions to a comprehensive, synoptic view of all experience. It takes into account all our propositions, as a connected "sticking-together" whole. *The coherence theory would then offer the following criterion*: Any proposition is true, if it is both self-consistent and coherently connected with our system of propositions as a whole.[71]

Or as Professor Bertocci puts it, in effect, empirical coherence embodies the sort of hypothesis which, without denying or distorting what is given in quality and relation, helps us further to relate them to each other in order to reduce mystery. As for the data of empirical coherence, they consist of all that is thought, known and felt up to the present moment No properly metaphysical enquiry can afford to limit itself to this or that hypothesis, but must rather search out new areas of development, and adopt new hypotheses for the old, only because the new accounts better than the old, for the elements of experience as experienced. It follows from a coherence criterion of truth—whether the coherence is rationalistic as in the main it is in Rāmānuja, or empirical as in Bowne—that truth is never fully achieved by finite beings, but is rather the goal and standard of all human striving toward knowledge.

THE IDEA OF COHERENCE IN RĀMĀNUJA

In Rāmānuja's view, while all true knowledge is representative of reality, its truth consists not so much in its representational character as in the degree to which it encompasses integration and wholeness. Human knowledge

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70. Edgar S. Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 69
71. *Ibid*, p. 69.

is imperfect by virtue of its finitude, the possibility of error being constantly present. However, through repeated attempts to connect together all our experiences, our knowledge of reality grows in depth and comprehensiveness. As it progresses towards its highest level, which is Brahman, experience falls more and more into a systematic pattern. Each part is seen to fit into a whole.

Now Rāmānuja makes a great deal of self-consciousness in connection with his criterion of truth. It is self-consciousness that is the supreme witness of truth. Thus he writes:

> The evidence of self-consciousness is the only trustworthy evidence, and if it is denied nothing remains to hold to.[72]

The importance of self-consciousness is precisely that it alone brings together the various parts of knowledge into a unity. It is the basis of that 'sticking-together' which is the essence of coherence. What decides in the last analysis between truth and falsity is self-consciousness. For "knowledge and being are supposed in each other."[73] Reality is a system, so that our judgments must be consistent not only with other judgments, but with the whole of knowledge. Such an all-comprehensive judgment is reached by the self-conscious personality in *yoga* where all other judgments are united to yield absolute knowledge or a sense of harmony. Not that Rāmānuja always talks in this non-empirical vein; he does not always present himself, as he does here, as an epistemological monist and consequently as a type of absolute idealist.

COHERENCE IN BOWNE

On occasion Bowne speaks as if the whole inquiry into the criterion of truth were futile, yet even while deprecat-

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72. S Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol II, p 677.
73. Ashutosh Bhattacharyya Shastri, *Studies in Post Śankara Dialectics*, (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1936), p. 21.

ing the inquiry he lays down the criterion of empirical coherence. Thus he writes:

> We learn that we can walk by walking, and in the same way we learn that we can know by knowing. Academic discussions of the standard of certainty or of the criterion of truth are barren of any valuable results. There is no general standard that the mind can mechanically apply. The standard is the mind itself, dealing with particular and concrete cases; and any given item of knowledge must stand or fall, not because it agrees or disagrees with some assumed standard, but because of the evidence with which it presents itself to the living mind in contact with facts.[74]

It is this contact of the living mind with facts that is the important thing for Bowne. And in his *Studies in Theism,* he writes that, "A universal standard of certitude is a chimera; but certitude is possible for persons."[75] In this mood, he goes so far as to commit himself to a pragmatic standard of truth. The criterion is workability in life. There is no surer test of reality, he opines, than life itself. Beliefs are validated in the light of their practical necessity in helping man to live his best life.[76]

Yet Bowne also suggests another criterion of truth. It is that of system, coherence, wholeness. At any rate, such a criterion is fairly inferrable from his insistence that reality is intelligible, and by this he means that all its parts exist together in an integrated whole. Why else should he insist that by truth he means rational principles? "Rational truth," he says, "is seen to be valid everywhere and always, and as a result of this insight, it is said to be necessary and universal."[77] Whence comes this necessity and universality, if not from the nature of reality itself? Further, the end of all knowledge is the absolute personality, the informing

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74. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge,* p. 293.

75. Borden P. Bowne, *Studies in Theology,* p. 58.

76. Borden P. Bowne, *Theism,* p. 27.

77. Borden P. Bowne, *Studies in Theism,* p 14.

principle of both knowledge and reality. What truth we achieve depends upon our success in storing up the fragments of our knowledge in terms of this ultimate principle, which is a person. What test of truth does all this imply except the test of coherence ?

SUMMARY AND COMPARISON

The terms synoptic, empirical and non-*a-priori* characterize the method of Bowne and on occasions that of Rāmānuja. Both thinkers are concerned to do the fullest justice to experience, not this or that experience, but experience as a whole. Both are clear about the deficiencies of logic as an instrument in this enterprise ; both place great emphasis upon the concrete character of truth and abjure all abstract universals. And finally, both conceive of the progress of knowledge as consisting in the comprehension of that principle, Brahman in the case of Rāmānuja, God in the case of Bowne, in terms of which reality is seen as a system of selves. To both thinkers life, not ideas, is the important thing.

In so far as it is possible to make out a predominant criterion of truth in Rāmānuja, it is coherence, and it is predominantly rationalistic coherence. Still there are suggestions in his work of a criterion of growing empirical coherence as well. The case is much clearer in Bowne, though it is true that he speaks of a criterion in no single voice. While he is speaking in a pragmatic vein, the criterion appears to be workability. Again, given his emphasis upon the intelligible character of reality, it would seem that rational coherence is his criterion. Actually, neither workability nor rationality are incompatible in Bowne with the criterion of growing empirical coherence. This is undoubtedly Bowne's criterion of truth. Such a criterion is the one most in keeping with the personalism of Bowne and the metaphysics of Rāmānuja

CHAPTER III

KNOWLEDGE : THE THEORIES OF RĀMĀNUJA AND BOWNE

When we confront Rāmānuja's theory of knowledge with that of Bowne, we find, as in other parts of their systems, an impressive community of ideas. For both thinkers there is the utmost parity between knowledge and reality. At the same time, whereas in Bowne epistemology is as independent as possible of metaphysics, in Rāmānuja, the two are identified.[1] And this identification is one of the outstanding features of Rāmānuja's philosophy.

In the Indian thinker's view, all knowledge, whether finite or infinite, is a dialectical process which illuminates not only the nature of our self-conscious life, but of the infinite-life and purpose as well. Indeed growth in knowledge of the one is growth in knowledge of the other, for there is no difference in nature between the infinite and the finite, only a difference in power.[2] In a manner reminiscent of Hegel, Rāmānuja regards the animating principle of both knowledge and existence as completely logical, so that for him ultimate reality is a kind of energizing reason.[3] No gap exists between thought and reality. The law which governs the development of our thought into a system of knowledge differs in no essential way from the law governing the expression of reality itself.

Thus the epistemological inquiry is not only revelatory of the inward nature of our self-conscious being but of the inward nature of the divine being.[4] This is not the

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1. Ashutosh Bhattacharyya Shastri, *Studies in Post Shankara Dialectics*, (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1936), p. 23.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

case for Bowne, who starts all over again to prove his idealism, after his *Theory of Thought and Knowledge* in his *Metaphysics*. Rāmānuja draws no distinction between absolute and relative truth, or between absolute and relative knowledge. The appearance of a distinction between them is owing to a failure to see knowledge in the light of its full development and concreteness. Relative knowledge is merely partial and imperfect vision, and this partiality and imperfection characterizes both popular and scientific knowledge; as they do not characterize philosophic knowledge, which yields infinite truth. Here all the relations implied in knowledge are seen as constituting a completely unified system.

Epistemology is thus of the highest philosophic importance in the system of Rāmānuja. It is confined neither to commonplace realism nor to subjective idealism. It is happily free of any tendency to deny the co-implication of subject and object, and it avoids the bare abstractions of a purely logical view. Along with realism it emphasizes the presentation of the object to the subject, at the same time it recognizes that the two do not merely cofront one another, but are brought together in a higher synthesis.[5]

Accordingly, in Rāmānuja's view, the development of thought is from the abstract to the concrete, from the indeterminate to the determinate, from relative impoverishment to an ever growing richness. Always the tendency of thought is to erect a concrete world of knowledge whose parts exist together in a system. Writing of Rāmānuja in this connection, Shastri observes:

> The necessity of thought is to build up a unity of system in which the parts are seen in the whole in their identity and distinctions. Rāmānuja thinks that when we perceive the whole we perceive a synthesized indentity of existence.[6]

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5 Ashutosh Bhattacharyya Shastri, *Studies in post Shankara Dialectics*, pp 24-25

6. *Ibid*, p. 26.

Such are the outstanding features of Rāmānuja's epistemology; features which, as we shall see, appear in one form or another, or to a greater or less degree in Bowne. If, as already pointed out, Bowne does not go so far as to identify the theory of knowledge with the theory of being, he yet emphasizes the intimacy of their connection. For a whole view of reality, he opines, the theory of knowledge and the theory of being must merge.

> Hence epistemology, (he writes) or the doctrine of of knowledge, and metaphysics, or the doctrine of real existence, are the two grand divisions of philosophy. As already pointed out, these do not admit of any absolute separation, as if the theory of one could be completed without a theory of the other. They are, then, different aspects of the whole question rather than mutually independent factors. At the same time, *they are sufficiently distinct to make it desirable to* treat them separately.[7]

Bowne is at pains to avoid the kind of monism which depends upon *the identification of thought and being* No less preoccupied than Rāmānuja, with concreteness in knowledge, Bowne's way of overcoming the dualism between thought and *thing differs somewhat from Rāmānuja's.* Whereas the latter lays stress upon the dialectical activity of reason, which he correlates with the Absolute Reason, the former singles out the element of creative activity in the thought and will of the Absolute. Bowne writes:

> Thought, then, is the supreme condition of any real monism. But this thought must be more than a passive conception in a mirroring consciousness. It must be a complex activity—must be, in fine, a thinker and a doer. Both elements are needed to meet the case. The production of reality cannot be reached by any analysis of conceptions, but only by a free actualization of conceptions. The conception in the understanding must be completed by the energizing in the will. In other words, creation is the only solution of

7. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge,* pp. 4-5

finite existence in which our thought can rest. The finite subject and the cosmic object must find their common ground and bond of union, not in some one impersonal substance, but in the absolute thought and will.[8]

Bowne, it may be said, is more emphatic than Rāmānuja, about the creative character of the Absolute Thought and of the contributory character of private thought, yet both thinkers are agreed that if thought and being are united it can not be in "some one impersonal substance."[9]

RĀMĀNUJA'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

We turn now to a detailed study of Rāmānuja's epistemology. As in his metaphysics, Rāmānuja's approach to epistemology is by way of a critique of his predecessors, with the object especially of reconciling realism and idealism. Rāmānuja recognizes four sources of knowledge: sense perception; inference; testimony or *śabda*; and intuition.

SENSE PERCEPTION

Rāmānuja assigns perception to the realm of external events, where all is change and flux. This realm is the world of space and time, and it is perceived by the self or the chief part of the self, that is, the mind. The mind confronted with objects of a certain sort, becomes aware of them through such sense modalities, as sight, sound, taste, touch and smell. These sensations are of brief duration, constantly shifting and changing and cease to exist in the absence of their objects. Yet they are preserved in consciousness, even if in a faint form as memory. Now Rāmānuja tries to show that the experience involved in perception is not the same permanent undifferentiated substratum which underlies the flux of particular sense objects, but is itself always a determinate event which is capable of be-

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8 Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 313

9 *Ibid*, p 313

ing sensed and points to an object This is to say that sense experience is intentional, referring to an object. Further he rejects the notion that knowledge can be explained within the confines of a metaphysical self composed of states of consciousness, and he is thus led to reject as well the identification of knowledge with states of consciousness. As one of Rāmānuja's commentators has written:

> Rāmānuja undertakes to show that what experience involves in perception is never a mere 'is', the so-called permanent behind the momentary 'this', but always a well-formed isolated event which can only, because of these characteristics, point to a 'this'. Nor does it mean that the activity of knowledge is merely an 'is'—the metaphysical reality of a physical stuff Nor can it be ever identified with consciousness as such.[10]

For Rāmānuja, then, it is impossible to think of consciousness out of relation to an object.[11] Pure consciousness is unthinkable, and even if it existed, it could not be proved to exist. The attempt to prove the self-luminous character of consciousness on the ground of its essential nature, which consists in revealing its objects, is self-defeating, for what is meant by the self-luminous character of consciousness is precisely its capacity to illumine the object. Deny this capacity and you deny its self-luminous character as well. Consciousness can only be grasped through the objects which consciousness reveals. Nor will it do to argue that objects can be dispensed with and consciousness apprehended by another consciousness, for this involves us in an infinite regress and does away with the possibility of knowledge altogether—consciousness without an object can never be cognized. And this is borne out by experience itself.

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10 K C. Varadachari, *Sri Ramanuja's Theory of Knowledge*, (Tirupati · Tirumalai-Tirupati Devastanam Press, 1943), p 9

11. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, "trans by George Thibaut, in The Sacred Books of the East Series, Vol XLVIII" (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904), p 52. *Note* Unless otherwise indicated all references to *Sri Bhashyam* will be from this translation

Indeterminate and Determinate Perception

By indeterminate perception Rāmānuja means the apprehension of a relatively undifferentiated object; relatively undifferentiated and not devoid of all difference, for otherwise the object could not be apprehended at all.[12] It is only in so far as the object exhibits characteristics, that is to say, exhibits distinctions and differences that it becomes accessible to consciousness and hence capable of being known. When we first encounter an object, say a cow, perception is indeterminate, but as we thereafter encounter other cows, perception becomes determinate. What happens is this. Our first perception of a cow is of a thing possessing structure, while further perception of members of the class cow leads by comparison to apprehension of the structure itself, that is, of a universal. Rāmānuja is here concerned with bringing out two things with regard to knowledge. First, even at the level of indeterminate perception, knowledge is always an awareness of differences. Consciousness would not be possible without such awareness, and primary among these differences is the subject-object reference implicit in all knowledge from the least to the most highly developed. Second, the universal is present in all perception, with this difference that at the indeterminate stage, it is only implicitly present, while at the determinate stage, it is explicitly present. In other words, at an indeterminate stage an object is seen as a mere object but at the determinate stage this is apprehended in its relations. The more determinate the perception, the more are the relations.

Sensation and Perception

To Rāmānuja, perception consists of two steps or moments, of which the second is perception itself, the first being sensation. Perception, he holds, is the product of discriminative activity, of comparison and inference. At the same time he insists that sensation cannot be reduced to mere passivity and hence deprived of all cognitive status.

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12 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 41

Rather sensation is to be considered as part of a dynamic process in which comparison and construction are present from the beginning. It is by the will of the agent that even the sense organs operate.[13] Rāmānuja's distinction, then, between the two moments in perception, is a distinction within a single active process which separates, distinguishes and compares. For him all cognition involves an act of synthesis.[14]

But synthesis in Rāmānuja has nothing in common with, say, the transcendental apperception of Kant. There is no suggestion in Rāmānuja's conception of "indeterminate and determinate cognition," that in perception the raw materials are gathered and then fused into knowledge in apperception. For Rāmānuja, even at the indeterminate level, synthesis is not altogether absent. From its inception, knowledge is a relating activity and involves relations, and it is this that makes judgment possible. Without determination knowledge is simply not knowledge. Knowledge, to be knowledge, must unfold the system of relations through which it expresses its own existence. Cognition is also recognition, that is, the discovery of what is there.

Characteristic of Cognition

Indeed, immanent in its very nature, is the necessity which impels it to grasp the determinate relations that constitute the domain of recognition. There is a dynamic thrust to the process of cognition by which knowledge constantly overcomes its indeterminate character and becomes fully determinate. It would appear, therefore, that for Rāmānuja the distinction between determinate and indeterminate knowledge, linked up as it is with the distinction he draws between sensation and perception as two moments in a single process, is a distinction of degree rather than of

13. K. C. Varadachari, *Sri Ramanuja's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 15.

14 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 63. cf. K. C. Varadachari, *Sri Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 15.

kind.[15] As knowledge develops in clearness and distinctness, as it does with the active exercise of memory, an indeterminate cognition, passes into a determinate one. In other words, all cognition, is recognition. Even where knowledge fails of a complete synthesis, it is still in some measure determinate, or indeterminate only in the sense that its connotations and relations, if intimated, remain ungrasped.

It is at this point that we may remark in passing that Rāmānuja's analysis of knowledge passes over into his metaphysics and underscores especially the fundamental difference between him and Śaṅkara.

Whereas Śaṅkara's absolue transcends the operations of thought, Rāmānuja's infinite is essentially a self-conscious principle which reveals its true nature in the synthetic unity of apperception. Śaṅkara's absolute is pure consciousness devoid of all determinations, while Rāmānuja's includes all determinations, and although remaining self-identical, expresses itself through an infinitude of qualifications.

To return to Rāmānuja's epistemology, Rāmānuja recognizes a striving in consciousness to relate itself to objects. Now, this striving does not cease with awareness of the subject-object relationship, but is directed further to understanding that the illumination it casts upon the object is an integral part of its own being. In a word, consciousness strives toward an awareness of its character as self-cognizer. It soon discovers its unity which remains in tact through the triple activity of positing itself, projecting itself, and finally understanding the projection and revelation of the object as parts of its own being.[16]

Are knowledge, consciousness and conscious activity all one then ? Are the knower and the act of knowing one ? We turn to this question in the next section.

15. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 73.
16 *Ibid*, pp 83-84

Consciousness, Cognition and Recognition

Rāmānuja's answer to the above question is in the affirmative. Consciousness is a function of the knower evinced in the act of cognition.

> It [Consciousness], writes Varadachari, is realizable as a function of the knower necessary for the purpose of life itself and it is inseparable from the existence of the knower. Every act of cognition reveals more or less simultaneously three terms, the object, the subject and the cognitive relation. It is the essence of cognition to reveal both the object and subject within itself as two poles which connects them though it belongs inseparably to the subject end. It is found that it is purposive in so far as it bears the message of the outer existence to its owner, the self, whose function it is revealed to be. It is thus a *dharma*, a function, a quality, dynamic, purposive and essentially belongs to some self. It is not found apart from its substrate, the self, whose function it is.[17]

So consciousness and the self go together, nor is this all. Consciousness, cognition and its object go together. To Rāmānuja, the essential nature of consciousness consists in this, that "it shines forth or manifests itself, by virtue of its very being, so that it is instrumental in proving its own object to its substrate."[18] These are cryptic words but they suggest two things which indicate an affirmative answer to the question with which we began this section.

First, it suggests, as Rāmānuja never tires of insisting, that consciousness is never a bare awareness without content. Consciousness is always directed upon an object, even where there is a qualitative identity between subject and object, as in the cognition of other consciousnesses.[19] But besides this realistic strain in Rāmānuja's theory of knowledge, there is another, and seemingly opposed strain, which

17. K. C. Varadachari, *Sri Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 21.

18. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, pp. 52-54.

19. This is a case where one self becomes aware of other selves as of similar character.

brings us to our second point. It is that consciousness and its objects are in the last analysis inseparable, so that the nature of consciousness is the paradigm of the nature of reality. This is the idealistic core of Rāmānuja's position.

As pointed out earlier, in cognizing, according to Rāmānuja, the object is presented to the mind or intelligence. Objects filter into the mind through the various senses, and cognition is always of real objects. But is there, then, no cognition of false objects, as for example, the stick that appears bent in water. Rāmānuja, in answering this question, points out that there is nothing in the cognitive process as such which would lead to the apprehension of falsity rather than truth. The case rather is that the human senses and the cognition based upon them are limited without being inherently defective. What we perceive is never anything unreal. Indeed, if the objects of perception were delusory or unreal, we would have no means at our disposal for discovering the fact. To Rāmānuja, therefore, the at times apparently unveridical character of perception is owing to the limitations of our sensory equipment and not to any intrinsic fault in them. As the senses are progressively purified, their objects come to be known more and more as they really are. We shall return to this matter in the discussion on Rāmānuja's theory of truth and error.

Cognition would not be cognition without recognition. In the same way as Bowne, Rāmānuja points out that recognition is the very essence of selfhood which provides for identity and permanence in the absence of which knowledge would be impossible. It is the existence of recognition that attests to this identity and permanence of the self We say, for example, "This very same thing was formerly apprehended by me."[20] But while the self is thus permanent, consciousness, for Rāmānuja, is not. He points to the fact that we say, "I know at present ; 'I' knew at a time ; 'I', the knowing subject, no longer have knowledge of this thing"[21]

20 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 56.
21. *Ibid*, p. 57.

Rāmānuja argues that if consciousness, which thus changes and fluctuates, were one with the cognizing self, it would be impossible for the latter to recognize the same object twice running. In his own words:

> If consciousness which changes every moment were admitted to constitute the conscious subject, it would be impossible for us to recognize the thing seen today as the one we saw yesterday; for what has been perceived by one cannot be recognized by another.[22]

Further he adds,

> Even if consciousness were identified with the conscious subject and acknowledged as permanent, this would no better account for the fact of recognition. For recognition implies a conscious subject persisting from the earlier to the later moment, and not merely consciousness[23]

INFERENCE

Besides perception as a source of knowledge, there is inference. The immediate effect of sense perception is to arouse belief in the reality of objects. Still what the senses report turns out often to be unveridical, yet if we confine ourselves to the senses no distinction can be drawn between true and false knowledge. The fault of empiricism is precisely the dogmatic acceptance of what is conveyed in sense perception. So long as we remain within the domain of the senses, its reports are all on an equal footing. They cannot be transcended and we are thus confined to the restricted subject-object relations that constitute empirical consciousness. But the senses sometimes deceive us, as reason discovers, and hence knowledge depends upon inference which follows in the wake of perception.

Inference produces a form of knowledge not by means of observation, but by means of some mark or sign that invariably accompanies an observation or perception. So, for example, we know the house is on fire because smoke issues

22. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 57.
23 *Ibid*, p. 57.

from it, and wherever there is smoke there is fire. Smoke is the sign from which we infer the presence of fire. The inference is based upon our previous knowledge that fire always accompanies smoke. In the same way, we know that Rāma is mortal because he is a man, and all men are mortal. Not that the mortality of Rāma is now perceived but rather that it is inferred from the manhood in him, which is perceived. Inference, therefore, is a process of reasoning which moves from the apprehension of a mark (*linga*) to the apprehension of another thing, and this in virtue of an invariable concomitance (*Vyāpti*) between the two Inference (*anumāna*), then, is a form of knowledge whose possibility depends upon the mediatory function of a mark.[24]

Logic of Inference

In the process that leads to the inference that the house is on fire, there is first the apprehension of the smoke, secondly, recollection of the concomitance of smoke and fire, and thirdly, knowledge that the house is on fire. Thus the inference here involves the house, which is the minor term (*paksa*), the subject under consideration; fire, which is the major term (*sādhya*), that which is to be established with reference to the house; and smoke, which is the middle term (*linga*), the mark or sign, the reason or ground (*hetu*) of the inference. Accordingly, the minor term is the subject with which we are concerned in any inference; the major term is the object of inferential cognition; and the middle term is its enabling principle, the bridge between the major and minor terms.

As in traditional Western logic, so in Indian logic inference takes the form of a syllogism, with this difference, however, that in the latter the order of the proposition is reversed, so that in the formal statement of an inference the conclusion is stated first and the major last. Aside from this difference, which is unimportant, there is another

24. B N. Seal, *The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, (Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1915), p 250

which distinguishes Indian from Western logic. Whereas in the Aristotelian logic, every syllogism contains three, and only three propositions, namely, the major premise, the minor premise and the conclusion, in Indian logic the syllogism, if it can still be called that, may consist of five propositions, known as its members or *avayavas.* These members are called *pratijñā, hetu, udāharaṇa, upanaya,* and *nigamana.* An illustration is as follows:

(a) Rāma is mortal (*pratijñā*)
(b) Because he is a man (*hetu*)
(c) All men are mortal (*udāharana*)
(d) Rāma also is a man (*upanaya*)
(e) Hence he is mortal (*nigamana*)

The first proposition (*pratijñā*) makes an assertion; the second (*hetu*) states the reason for the assertion; the third (*udāharaṇa*) states a universal by which the asserted fact and the reason for its assertion are related; the fourth (*upanaya*) is the application of the universal to the case in point; and the fifth (*nigamana*) is the conclusion which follows from the preceding propositions.[24a]

The Grounds of Inference

The invariable concomitance (*Vyāpti*) which is supposed to hold between the major and minor terms underlies the validity of any inference, and guarantees its truth, provided of course that the concomitance is itself a fact. We are confronted, therefore, with the question, what is *Vyāpti,* how is it established and how is it known by us? Now *Vyāpti* taken literally means a state of pervasion and implies a correlation between two things, one of which is pervaded and the other the pervader. One thing is said to pervade

24a. Not all Indian logicians, however, held that five propositions were necessary for a valid inference The number might be two, three, four or five depending upon the context and upon the person to whom the argument was addressed. But whenever a formal statement is required, all five propositions were used. Satischandra Chatterjee, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy,* 4th ed., (Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1950), p. 186.

another when it is an invariable accompaniment of the other.[25] In this sense smoke is pervaded by fire since it is always accompanied by fire. A *vyāpti* between terms of unequal extension, as, for example, fire and smoke, is called *asamavyāpti* or *visamavyāpti*;[26] and signifies a non-equivalent concomitance between two terms, from only one of which we may infer the other. Fire may be inferred from smoke, but not smoke from fire. A *vyāpti* between two terms of equal extension is called *samavyāpti*. Here *vyāpti* holds equally between two terms which, as being co-extensive, allows us to infer either of them from the other.

Essential to any inference then, is the existence of a relation between the middle and major terms. In other words, no conclusion can be drawn from premises unless one of them is universal. Now the relation or *vyāpti* between the middle and major terms is generally a relation of co-existence. But not every instance of co-existence is an instance of *vyāpti*. Fire may co-exist without smoke and in such cases the relation of co-existence is fortuitous, that is, dependent on circumstances other than the nature of the terms related. So the definition or *vyāpti*, offered by Rāmānuja, is that it is a relation between the middle and major terms which is independent of all conditions It is an invariable and unconditional relation between the middle and major terms of an inference.

How then is a *vyāpti* established or known? What warrant is there for the universal proposition that fiery objects are smoky? The problem is the problem of induction. Implied in Rāmānuja's thought on the subject is the theory that a *vyāpti* or universal connection is discovered through experience. At the same time he holds that induction is not an inference of the form, "some men are mortal, therefore, all men are mortal," which is obviously invalid. It would seem, therefore, that while induction is a process

25. B. N. Seal, *The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, p. 186.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 189-190 Note: *Asamavyāpti* may be translated as unequal relation

of generalization from particulars, it grasps the universal present in these particulars in the act of enumerating them. So inferential conclusions always represent a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning.

TESTIMONY OR *ŚABDA*

No less important than the knowledge which comes about through inferential reasoning is that derived from testimony or *Śabda*. The term itself means "sound" or "word," and in an epistemological setting refers to the theory that knowledge comes about through the use of words. The theory is not peculiar to Rāmānuja, but has a still earlier exponent in the person of *Bhartṛhari*, who went so far as to maintain that knowledge is only possible through the use of words, and indeed that word and knowledge are indentical.[27] Such identification is an outgrowth of the metaphysical theory according to which the universe stems from the eternal word (*Śabdabrahman*).[28] Further the word is made synonymous with consciousness and it is argued that,

> Consciousness without word is comparable to light without its illumination. Since word refers to something beyond itself and is thus by its constitution relational, all knowledge is therefore relational and determinate.[29]

Cognition from the very first, it is argued, is a judgment and associated with verbal expression, even though the latter may be of the most general kind.[30] Particular verbal expression may be lacking, yet the perceived object will be referred to at least in its most generic verbal character, as for example, in the statement, "It is a substance or something." The object in all its particularity is known only when the specific word presents itself. And the word may be either spoken or written.

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27. Ashutosh Bhattacharyya Shastri, *Studies in post Shankara Dialectics*, p 32.
28 *Ibid.*, p 32.
29 *Ibid.*, p. 32
30 *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

Now this whole theory is intended to establish the authority of the *Vedas,* since the *Vedas* are considered to be the written records of the words first heard by and then spoken by the great seers.[31] As emanating from a transcendent source, these utterances were brought together in the *Vedas.* Thus the body of literature as the *Vedas, Vedānta-sutras,* and *Upanisads* became the authoritative source of knowledge concerning Brahman or ultimate reality, and were called *Śruti or Śabda-pramāna.*

Still another reason was proffered for the reliable and authoritative character of *Śabda-pramāṇa,* namely the test of experience. Subjected to this test by the great seers and their followers, and subjected likewise to steady criticism, the *Vedas* and *Upanisads* have withstood the tooth of time, and hence are regarded as yielding knowledge of the nature of ultimate reality. Such knowledge has been the prime quest of the followers.[32] We shall postpone detailed discussion of the validity of *śabda* or testimony of the scriptures, as based upon experience, till we take up in a later section the tests of truth.

The argument adduced by Rāmānuja for the validity of knowledge derived from *śabda* ties in with the realistic emphasis of his epistemology in general. The objects of knowledge are in nowise dependent upon self or mind. They exist independently of the knower. Their *esse* is not determined by their *percipi,* rather their *percipi* is determined by their *esse.* This position of Rāmānuja goes by the name of *Satkyāti,* which means that objects are not dependent for their existence upon being known and further that only that which exists is cognized Cognition without a real object is impossible.[33] If then *śabda* is a source of knowledge for

31. K. C Varadachari, *Sri Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge,* p. 32

32 *Ibid*, p 33

33. H. Mohan Bhattacharyya, *The Principles of Philosophy,* (Calcutta · University of Calcutta, 1948), p. 157.

Rāmānuja, it is because he holds that the principles enunciated in the *Vedas* exist in the mind of Brahman, who is the supreme person.[34] In a word, these principles have an objective existence and are capable of being known. But the question arises, how is this knowledge available to human beings through perception ? The answer lies in *yogic* practices. By means of such practices the individual achieves a degree of purity which enables him to receive impressions of a high order, that is, impressions untainted by the sense organs or *karma*. Underlying *śabda*, therefore, and the ground of its validity, are the superfine perceptions of the yogies, perceptions which are communicated to the world.[35] In this way, Rāmānuja brings *śabda* within the orbit of perception and into line with his realism. Perception remains the test of valid cognition.

INTUITION

In his commentary on *Śrī Bhāsyam*, Rāmānuja points out that an extra-logical knowledge of reality through intuition is possible, though only in meditation, marked by the quality of devotion.[36] What is intuition ? The term has a variety of meanings in Western Philosophy, a variety that may be owing to the fact that intuition is generally regarded as being opposed to that of reason on which philosophic explanation is based. Yet there have been thinkers who maintained that intuition is alone competent to give us truth in its entirety, while reason, which is discursive and analytical, yields merely partial views To the rationalistic philosopher, for whom all that is real is rational, reason of course is the key to reality, the high road to the apprehension of truth. He is inclined to look down upon intuition, to regard it as a complex psychical phenomenon, a mixture of inherited beliefs and memories The mystic deludes

34. K. C. Varadachari, *Srı Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge*, p 41.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

36. Sri Rāmānuja, *The Three Tatvas*, trans. by V. K. Ramanujachari, (Madras: Vasanta Press, Adyar, 1932), p. 8.

himself supposing that he has a super-normal vision of things that are inaccessible to the mind guided by experience and reason. It is only too likely that the mystic reads his own desires and feelings into nature. He denies this, but it should be borne in mind "that the peculiar feelings of certainty which attend the mystic vision is not itself a criterion of objective truth."[37]

As in Western, so in Indian philosophy there are various views of the nature of intuition. So Śaṅkara claims that intuition is a type of consciousness or experience wherein the distinction of subject and object is superseded and the way paved to the realization of the truth of the supreme self. Unlike the fragmentary perception of Śabda, intuition is a synthetic grasp of reality. The intuitive experience is ineffable, beyond thought and speech. Once had, it yields the certainly of a divine presence and transforms our whole life. It is a state of consciousness which the individual achieves when he has succeeded in stripping himself of all that is finite, including intelligence itself.[38] In Śaṅkara's view, intuition and fact belong to wholly separate realms. Intuition itself cannot be intuited, for "anything that is intuited is a fact, not an intuition."[39]

Rāmānuja rejects this view, pointing out that there is no principle in terms of which it can be shown that as soon as an intuition is intuited, it ceases to be an intuition. There is no ground for the divorce of intuition from fact. On the contrary, "introspection gives us conclusive evidence that moments of intuition are as much real as intuition itself. An intuition has two poles of existence, a subject, its locus, and an object it reveals"[40] The unity of intuition is a synthetic unity. Its moments may appear and disappear, but intuition itself with its twofold relation to a subject and

37. William Pepperell Montague, *The Ways of Knowing*, (New York MacMillan Company, 1925), p 58

38 S Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, p 511.

39 Mahendranath Sircar, *Comparative Studies in Vedantism*, (Oxford Oxford University Press, 1927), p 12

40 *Ibid* p 12

object undergoes no change as a synthetic unity. Further, intuition has no transcendental character in the sense that it rises above all predicates. To Rāmānuja, intuition is a dynamic process and reveals itself in the act of illuminating facts to the self and so assumes a self-conscious character.

Now the knowledge attained through intuition is superior to that attained through perception, which is fragmentary, or through inference, which rests upon the partialities perception. Not that Rāmānuja is concerned to disparage either perception or inference; both yield genuine knowledge, but such knowledge is limited and never extends to the highest reality or the highest perfection. For the fullest insight into reality intuition is indispensable. But indispensable, it is not easily achieved, for

> intuition even though natural to the individual, is feeble, and has to be strengthened by practice of disinterested devotion to knowledge and to the highest purposes of the Divine.[41]

Super-Sensory intuition is directed to the internal or spiritual, whereas ordinary perception is oriented to external reality, though the internal and external are the two aspects of a thing itself. Whatever may be the means by which knowledge is obtained, the mind judges its object and the judgment itself may be immediate and deductive involving a process of mental activity.

JUDGMENT

In idealistic theories of knowledge the role of judgment is central. No knowledge without judgment, say the idealists. Rāmānuja says much the same thing. We have seen that for him, knowledge involves interpretation, and it is necessary to add now that interpretation cannot take place without the help of judgment. Various, isolated sense impressions stream in upon the mind, but these impressions as such afford us no knowledge of reality. They are felt and

41. K C. Varadachari, *Sri Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 28.

not known Knowledge arises only when the mind discerns a meaning in the impressions of sense, and this it can only do by organizing them into a system Indeed, system is another name for knowledge, and the discovery of system comes about through the act of judging

Knowledge, then, is the interpretation of reality through judgment, and it is an interpretation that is never final, but in constant process of growth as the mind grasps more and more of the aspects and relations of which reality is composed And this progress is by way of perception, inference, testimony and intuition And judgment is involved in all of these And so likewise is experience, self-conscious, and moreover concrete It is not an experience that lies below or beyond relations Further, whether it is human or divine experience, whether experience is immediate or mediate, unity is its characteristic Its *locus standi* is self-consciousness and in self-consciousness experience invariably reveals the duality of subject and object Self-consciousness is essentially relational and synoptic If it were not, there would be no self-conscious apprehension and no experience On the basis of this relational view of consciousness, Rāmānuja rejects the possibility of any purely simple apprehension There are stages in perceptual consciousness, but the passage is not from the simple to the complex, but from the complex to the more complex We have seen that an indeterminate perception, that is, of an object by itself, is only relatively indeterminate, since an object is never quite perceived by itself And judgment, however incomplete, is likewise present, even at the relatively indeterminate stage of cognition So the foundation stones of Rāmanuja's theory of knowledge are the determinate perception and the judgment that is inseparable from it

PRACTICE PERCEPTION AND CONSCIOUSNESS

To Rāmānuja knowledge is not merely contemplative but practical It is subservient to action "The Self," he says, "apprehends cognitions in order to react to their ob-

jects. It does not apprehend them for their own sake."[42] It is this view of the practical character of knowledge that leads Rāmānuja to emphasize at the same time the realistic character of perception. He observes:

> To deny the existence of objects other than perceptions is not possible; for perception is seen as possessing this character to make it possible for a knower (self) to speak about a particular object. Every-one, as is well known, perceives thus—'I see a jar.' This act of perception is connected with a person as perceiver and with a thing as its objects; and it is vivid perception of which all the world is witness.[43]

Pursuing his argument in favour of realism, Rāmānuja points out that while it is true that ideas and their objects are invariably apprehended together it does not follow that idea and object are the same. Indeed such a conclusion is *wholly false and untenable.*

> The opponent's argument, that perception and object being invariably perceived together, the quality blue and its perception do not differ, is untenable. It conflicts with its own statement: for being together in the perception must result from difference in the objects seen. The perception makes an object fit to be spoken about, how can it be identical with the object?[44]

Now this realism of Rāmānuja's is advocated together with what, as Professor Sinha points out, may be called a presentative theory of perception.[45] However it should be observed with regard to Rāmānuja's defence of his theory that it is a defence rather of one of its consequences rather than of the theory itself. The theory of course is to the effect that what we know is not the mental surrogates of objects but the objects themselves. And thus Rāmānuja insists that

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42 Jadunath Sinha, *Indian Realism*, (London: K Paul Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1938), p 254.

43 *Sri Rāmānuja, Sri Bhashyam, tr. Diwan Bahadur V. K.* Ramanujachari, p. 542.

44. *Ibid*, p. 542.

45. Sri Rāmānuja, *The Three Tatvas*, p 9 cf. Jadunath Sinha, *Indian Realism*, p. 258.

> The particular character of a perception cannot be the character of an object that has disappeared and has ceased to exist. For such a thing has not been seen. When an object disappears, its attribute cannot be seen in another object. A reflection on a mirror subsists only so long as an object is present before it; but not after it has moved off. Even there it is not the attribute only that appears; the object too is reflected. Hence the peculiar character of a perception imported to it by an object needs the existence of the object at the moment of knowing it.[46]

Further, Rāmānuja argues that cognition is not confined to universals but is apprehension of the object in all its particularity. He writes:

> In reply to the assertion that perception causes the apprehension of pure Being only, and therefore cannot have difference for its object and that 'difference' cannot be defined because it does not admit of being set forth in definite alternatives; we point out that these charges are completely refuted by the fact that the only objects of perception are things distinguished by generic character and so on, and that generic character and so on—as being relative things—give at once rise to the judgment as to the distinction between themselves and the things in which they inhere. You yourself admit that in the case of knowledge and in that of colour and other qualities this relation holds good, viz., that something which gives rise to a judgment about another thing at the same time gives rise to a judgment about itself. The same may therefore be admitted with regard to difference. (Colour reveals itself as well as the thing that has colour; knowledge reveals itself as well as the object known; so difference manifests itself as well as the things that differ.)[47]

What Rāmānuja appears to be concerned to emphasize in this difficult passage is that perceptual cognition consists of a single act in which the object is directly given both in its generic and specific character. But he never tires of insisting that the cognitive process is always present whether

46. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 539.
47. *Ibid*, p 44.

it be the object apprehended or the subject knowing. Thus he declares:

> Even if perceptive cognition takes place within one moment, we apprehend within that moment the generic character which constitutes on the one hand the difference of the thing from others, and on the other hand the peculiar character of the thing itself; and thus there remains nothing to be apprehended in a second moment.[48]

It appears, therefore, from Rāmānuja's somewhat scattered remarks on the topic that the object is directly present to perception, and not as a mere identity but as possessing attributes and therefore as a differentiated and structured thing. Involved in all this is a relation between subject and object, and this relation is established by consciousness. What then is consciousness in Rāmānuja's view? He begins by telling us what consciousness is not. First, it is not to be identified with Being. He writes:

> And as the distinction between consciousness and its objects—which rests just on this relation of object and that for which the object is—is proved by perception, the assertion that only consciousness has real existence is also disposed of.[49]

Consciousness, he goes on to say, is self-luminous and is an object at all only in virtue of this self-luminosity. And it makes its presence known to its own substrate, namely, the self, precisely because its objectivity is self-illuminating. Yet consciousness is never an object to the self in the act of knowing, nor is it always self-luminous. The matter is explained by Rāmānuja in the following passage:

> The contention that consciousness is not an object holds good for the knowing self at the time when it illumines (i.e., constitutes as its objects) other things; but there is no absolute rule as to all consciousness never being anything but self-luminous. For common observation shows that the consciousness of one person may become the object of the cognition of another, viz.

48. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 44
49. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

> of an inference founded on a person's friendly or unfriendly appearance and the like, and again that a person's own past states of consciousness may become the object of his own cognition—as appears from judgments such as 'At one time I knew.' It cannot therefore be said, 'If it is consciousness it is self proved . . . nor that consciousness if becoming an object of consciousness would no longer be consciousness; for from this it would follow that one's own past states and the conscious states of others—because being objects of consciousness—are not themselves consciousness.[50]

If things, jars, for example, lack the attribute of consciousness, it is not because they are objects of consciousness, but because they lack the characteristic of self-luminosity. They are not by their own being objects to themselves. It is simply ridiculous to maintain as a general principle that something which is an object of consciousness cannot itself be conscious.[51]

> If we made the presence of consciousness, says Rāmānuja, dependent on the absence of its being an object of consciousness, we should arrive at the conclusion that consciousness is not consciousness ; for there are things, e g., sky-flowers, which are not objects of consciousness and at the same time are not consciousness.[52]

Having disposed of by means of this dialectic the thesis that consciousness does not admit of being an object, Rāmānuja reiterates his view that:

> The essential nature of consciousness—or knowledge—consists there—in that it shines forth, or manifests itself, through its own being to its own substrate at the present moment; or (to give another definition) that it is instrumental in proving its own object to its own being.[53]

While, moreover, consciousness cannot exist apart from a subject, it can exist apart from external objects, as for

50. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, (tr by Thibaut), p 48
51. *Ibid*, p 48
52 *Ibid*, p. 50
53 *Ibid*, p 48.

example, in introspection, dreams, and imaginings. Even in these instances it is the subject that owns the consciousness and not consciousness that permeates the subject and object.[54]

Rāmānuja next turns his attention to certain important features of consciousness. First, he points out that consciousness is the attribute of a permanent conscious self. He writes:

> The essential character of consciousness or knowledge is that by its very existence it renders things capable of becoming objects to its own substrate, of thought and speech. This consciousness (*anubhūti*) which is also termed *Jñāna, avagati, samvid,* is a particular attribute belonging to a conscious self and related to an object: as such it is known to every one on the testimony of his own Self—as appears from ordinary judgments such as 'I know the jar', 'I understand this matter', 'I am conscious of (the presence of) this piece of cloth'.[55]

And it would be difficult to say that consciousness is itself an agent, as difficult as saying that the object of action is the agent.

> Of this consciousness which thus clearly presents itself as the attribute of an agent and as related to an object, it would be difficult indeed to prove that at the same time it is itself agent; as difficult as it would be to prove that the object of action is the agent.[56]

As a still further characterization of consciousness Rāmānuja holds that consciousness is a transitory function of the subject in the sense that it is not continuously present, as the knowing self recognizes. From this he draws the conclusion that consciousness [knowledge] and conscious subject are not one. He argues as follows:

> The permanency of the conscious subject is proved *by the fact of recognition. This very same thing was*

54 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, pp. 52-54.

55. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, (tr. by Thibaut), p. 56.

56. *Ibid*, p. 56.

> formerly apprehended by me? The non-permanency of consciousness on the other hand is proved by thought expressing itself in the following forms, 'I know at present,' 'I knew at a time,' 'I, the knowing subject, no longer have knowledge of this thing.' How then should consciousness and the conscious subject be one?[57]

In Rāmānuja's view further consciousness as a function of a subject is neither a stream nor an expanse, nor is it made up of discrete snatches of momentary experiences like links in a chain.[58] As he puts it,

> the antecedent non-existence of consciousness cannot be ascertained by perception, for it is not something present at the time of perception. . . . Hence in the absence of any valid instrument of knowledge the antecedent non-existence of consciousness cannot be established at all.[59]

But as he at once points out, "there is a valid means of knowledge whereby to prove the antecedent non-existence of consciousness, viz., valid non-perception (*anupalabdhi*)."[60]

In effect the latter term signifies what McTaggart has called a state of 'suspended animation' in which consciousness is not active, either because of the absence of body or lack of co-ordination.[61] The non-perception named *anupalabdhi* is as valid as the perception of darkness or the colour black or non-existence.[62]

Further yet, Rāmānuja conceives of consciousness as a power (*dharma*), sometimes called also *Viśesana* or qualification. It is not a *Sākśi* or witness, since to be a witness would imply that consciousness is a subject, whereas the truth is that it is a function of and belongs to a knowing subject or self. To Rāmānuja

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57 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam* pp. 56-57

58. K. C. Varadachari, *Sri Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 52.

59. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, (tr. by Thibaut), p. 51.

60. *Ibid*, p 52

61. K. C. Varadachari, *Sri Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 52.

62. *Ibid*, p. 52

> The very existence of consciousness, its being a consciousness at all, and its being self-luminous, depends on its connection with a Self; when that connexion is dissolved, consciousness itself cannot be established, not any more than the act of cutting can take place when there is no person to cut and nothing to be cut.[63]

Finally, Rāmānuja maintains that consciousness is not the absolute Brahman, nor that it is the individual self. The dependence of individual selves and objects upon the existence of absolute Brahman does not entail giving to consciousness the status of a subject; for where Brahman is the absolute knower consciousness appears only as a function or attribute which Brahman possesses.

To sum up, we may say that for Rāmānuja consciousness is the attribute of a knowing self and that without self or objects, both of them real, consciousness would be impossible. *Consciousness and its objects are perceived as different from each other; one apprehends and the other is apprehended. The two are correlative, so that in the* absence of objects altogether, there would be no testimony to the presence of consciousness. Another point with regard to consciousness is its self-luminosity under certain conditions. Conditions that do always hold. Consciousness manifests itself to the cognizing self in the process of the self's apprehension of an object. Accordingly it does not *manifest itself to the self at all times. Furthermore,* the consciousness of one person is inferred by another from the behaviour of the first, and is thus an object of inferential cognition. Our own past states of consciousness may become for us objects of present recollection. If consciousness as an object is not, any more than other objects, self-luminous, still, even as an object it retains its character as consciousness. Repeating what has already been quoted from Rāmānuja, the essential nature of consciousness consists in that "it shines forth, or manifests itself, through its own being to its own substrate at the present moment or . . . That

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63 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, (tr by Thibaut), p 58

it is instrumental in proving its own object by its own being."[64]

THE COGNITIVE RELATION

According to Rāmānuja two kinds of relation are involved in the knowledge situation, one external, the other internal. In cognition the subject apprehends an object and such apprehension is external, conjunctive and direct. No third element intervenes, as for example a representation, which in a dualistic theory stands for the object. To Rāmānuja, perception is direct, or as he calls it, vivid. Now what is involved in the direct relationship of subject and object that characterizes knowledge is a particular, together with a class concept or universal.

> Sense perception is vivid perception, i.e , perception of an object with the shape, size and colour peculiar to it. In all perception there is a common character which is known as *jāti* or (class concept). It cannot be described in words but must be characterized by every one from his experience[65]

It is not easy to make out what Rāmānuja means by *jāti* or class concept, for, according to the usual notion, it is just this that is the communicable part of experience, the particular as such being ineffable. Obviously therefore, *jāti* is not the logical conception which appears in Western thought, but an essence or universal in some special sense, which is no further describable.

In any case, for Rāmānuja the relation that knowledge establishes is a relation between a spiritual subject on the one hand, and an object that might be 'other' than the subject on the other hand It is an experiential relation and, as existing in experience, establishes the significance of the outer world Experience of the outer world is a direct transaction in need of no intermediary between it and the sense organs, such as image or representations External

64 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, (tr by Thibaut), p 48
65 Sri Rāmānuja, *The Three Tatvas*, p 7

objects, including space and time, are perceived directly at the same time that their existence is in no sense dependent upon being perceived. Perception makes no difference to the thing perceived. Both subject and object are real and neither at the epistemological level is a creation of thought.

But the external relation that characterizes knowledge is not the whole story. For if the relata figuring in this relation were completely external to one another, knowledge would be impossible. For example, if the relation between the hand and the pen were merely external they could never come together. So in the case of knowledge if the object were utterly outside the mind, it could not be known, just as, if the mind were completely self enclosed it could not know. It is at this point that Rāmānuja introduces his theory of the inseparable attribute or *aprthak-siddhaviśesaṇa*. In other words, he considers knowledge as being constituted not only of an external but of an internal relation. Consciousness, which is a power of the self, illumines both the subject and the object and thereby relates them. It is this relation that Rāmānuja calls internal. In an attempt to throw further light on this view, Professor Srinivasachari says that knowledge starts from the self and by means of its intelligence and sense organs comes into contact with the object, assumes its form and thus reveals it [66] The relational principle here set up is supplied by intelligence as an attribute of the self. Further, the object in the knowledge situation is not an idea or any mental modifications, nor is it the self appearing as object. Subject and object are interrelated reals, compresent to one another, and illumined by attributive consciousness or *viśesa* of knowledge. Rāmānuja distinguishes the relation between subject and object, which is external, and the subject-object relation, which is internal. The latter may be compared to the relationship of hand and fingers, a relation that is internal and organic.

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66 P. N. Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita*, (Madras: Vasanta Press, Adyar, 1943), p. 24.

The organic relation called by Rāmānuja the subject-object relation is explainable ultimately only in terms of the activity of the Infinite self or Brahman. It is known through religious insight which reveals the object as the immanent activity of Brahman.[67] A commentator on Rāmānuja writes in this connection:

> The ultimate explanation of the subject-object relation is afforded by the religious insight that the real subject of every judgment is Brahman which is in all things not as a *tertium quid* but as their inner self. When I say 'I think,' it really means 'Brahman thinks in me as myself.' Brahman as finite intelligence is the *prius* and pre-supposition of finite thought and has more affinity with it than with external things.[68]

THE SELF IN COGNITION

Knowledge always belongs to and exists for a self. It is for this reason called *dharma-bhūta-jñāna* or attributive knowledge. Knowledge is like light; the self is like the lamp; and attributive knowledge is like the rays. The self is not mere consciousness; it is a knower. Rāmānuja explains:

> Where there is light, it must belong to something as shown by the light of a lamp. Hence the self thus cannot be mere consciousness.[69]

Rāmānuja insists that the self is not consciousness. On the other hand he is equally emphatic in that the

> very existence of consciousness, its being a consciousness at all, and its being self-luminous, depend on its connection with a self; when the connection is dissolved consciousness itself cannot be established.[70]

He employs as illustration the act of cutting, which cannot take place unless there is a cutter and something to be cut.

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67. *Note*: It is not clear how Rāmānuja arrives at this position.

68 P. N. Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita*, p 26.

69. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, (tr by Thibaut), p. 60.

70. *Ibid.*, p 58

What then is the self? It is, concludes Rāmānuja, the 'I' present in all knowing, the anchorage of all knowledge. He writes:

> The conclusion remains therefore that the Self is nothing but the knowing 'I'. Thus it has been said, 'As is proved by perception, and as . . . the self presents itself as a knowing 'I'. And again, 'That which is different from the body, senses, mind, and vital airs; which does not depend on other means; which is permanent, pervading, divided according to bodies—that is the self blessed in itself.'[71]

So it is the 'I' that constitutes the essential nature of the inward self. If the 'I' is not identical with self-consciousness whereby the individual is aware of himself as knowing, it is nevertheless comparable to self-consciousness. Further, according to what is shown here self is eternal and so is knowledge.[72] But though eternal the individual self differs from the absolute self. Whereas the individual self consists of knowledge and is a mode of the absolute self, the latter consists wholly of bliss. "And hence we hold," writes Rāmānuja, "that different from the self consisting of knowledge, i.e., the individual soul, is the self consisting of bliss, i.e., the highest self."[73]

It would appear that for Rāmānuja the finite or individual self is an attribute, in part material, of the absolute self. Whereas the one acquires knowledge piece-meal through a variety of experiences, the other is the enjoyer of all knowledge at once. Does this mean that there is an epistemological difference between the knowledge of finite selves and that of the absolute? Rāmānuja's answer is that in the one case as in the other, knowing is the direct apprehension of the object. Yet there is a difference. The sense organs of the absolute self place no limitations upon him. They serve his mind or intelligence perfectly, adapted

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71. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 72.
72. Chandradhar Sharma, *Indian Philosophy*, (Banaras: Nand Kishore & Bros, 1952), p. 494.
73. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, (tr. by Thibaut), p 229.

as they are to the demands of the very widest, fullest and most integral apprehension. What differentiates the absolute self's knowledge from that of the finite self is total, utterly unhindered comprehension.

TRUTH AND ERROR

It would seem at first blush that there is no place for error or illusion in Rāmānuja's theory of knowledge. If perception is always of "real" objects and as far as it goes cognition is always unerring, as he appears to maintain, we apprehend and can apprehend nothing but the truth. Even the objects that appear in dreams are real, even if dim and hazy.[74] How, then, does the dream objects come to be? Rāmānuja's answer here throws some light on his position in general with regard to truth and error. He writes:

> Knowledge not resting on a thing as its object does not exist; for it is nowhere seen, i.e, knowledge without a person that knows and an object known. Even dream perceptions do not rest on nothing. What is seen in dreams is created by the highest *Atma* so as to be experienced only by the dreamer and that only for the time being.[75]

It is to retrospective thought that the dream object appears to be unreal. Not so, however, the perception itself.

> The perception is not unreal. For in dreams what is unreal is the things perceived; and these alone are seen to be nullified. But the perception is not nullified; for the thought never comes to one that the perception that he had when he dreamt was also unreal. The subsequent thought that nullifies is: 'The perception remains; but the things do not exist.'[76]

Now Rāmānuja does use the word 'unreal' with regard to dream objects, but he must not be supposed on that account

74. H. Mohan Bhattacharyya, *The Principles of Philosophy*, p. 157.

75. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, (tr. by Ramanujachari), p. 54.

76 Sri Rāmānuja, *The Three Tatvas*, p 122

to be *saying* that dream perceptions are false. For if the dream perception is real, it must convey, on his presentative theory, some sort of knowledge. And this indeed is his contention, for he declares:

> *The reality of the perception always goes with* something that the perception can grasp; and for this purpose the mere appearance of a thing will suffice. In the cognition of something that is past or that is yet to come, though the thing is not present, its mere appearance suffices. On the other hand, a thing may exist; but until it appears before one it is not cognized. It may therefore be concluded that the appearance of *things is all that is needed for cognition.*[77]

All this may appear like a darkening of counsel, yet Rāmānuja adheres to his paradoxical thesis that knowledge is always true, for the reason that all knowledge reveals *some object. Is he then prepared to say that even in so* called 'illusory' perception we have knowledge without the appropriate objects? The answer appears to be yes, for Rāmānuja continues to maintain that even in illusory perception, as for example, to use his own instance, the perception of shell-silver, there is true knowledge in so far as its content is real, and we may add that the content can never help being real in some sense.[78] Yet if Rāmānuja seems to be evading the ordinary distinction between truth and error or illusion, he does so by redefining illusion. Illusion for him is not the perception of the unreal, but a case rather in which one object is confused with another owing to the presence of a common substance present in the confounded objects in different proportions. It is in this way that Rāmānuja upholds his doctrine that something real is always present to perception, though 'the something' may be misidentified. Such misidentification may result not only from the partial identity mentioned above, but from the limitations or defects of our sense organs

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77. Sri Rāmānuja, *The Three Tatvas*, p 122.
78. H Mohan Bhattacharyya, *The Principles of Philosophy*, (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1948), pp 157-158

Defective as these arguments may be, and they are not entirely clear either, Rāmānuja insists that it is a mistake to distinguish cognition into true and false. Given in all cognition is a real presentative element which, because it is perceived in greater or less proportion, determines the so-called distinction between truth and error. What the matter comes to is this: although all perception is true, its truth is of various degrees. There is always some degree of parity between any given perception and its object. Where 'error' occurs it is owing to omission, that is, incomplete knowledge of the object presented to consciousness. Since such omission or incomplete knowledge may occur in as many ways as there are individual knowers, the distinction between truth and 'error' is an individual and private matter.

The jaundiced person sees the conch-shell as yellow, or the sleeping person may see white elephants in his dream. In what sense may either of these be labelled erroneous perceptions? For one thing they may not fit into a coherent scheme of experience; for another thing they may fail to tally with social experience, that is, the experience of our fellowmen.[79] Neither the yellowness of the conch-shell, nor the dream elephants are shareable. But Rāmānuja insists that these experiences are of objects that are real for the individual, though their reality is not public The yellowness of the conch-shell is a real property transmitted to the shell by the perceiver. In the case of the dream elephant, it too is a real object, presented, it seems, to the dreamer's consciousness by God. If we withhold the term true of such experiences, it is not because real objects are not present in them, but because their status is private rather than public. Further, we withhold the term true for practical reasons These private objects do no work, they cannot be handled, and when their status is realized, they lead to no action. In a word, they fail to pass the

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79 H. Mohan Bhattacharyya, *The Principles of Philosophy*, p 160.

pragmatic test Yet Rāmānuja insists that "in all these cases the perception is real," but the presented object "does not originate, nor can it do work as a real thing does"[80]

Such is Rāmānuja's theory of truth and of 'error' in his peculiar sense of the term He appears to adopt two tests of truth, namely, coherence, and practice, and of these the first is comparable to Bowne's empirical coherence We may note here in Rāmānuja's theory of knowledge, as well as in Bowne's, a mixture of realism and idealism, with a suggestion of pragmatism in both thinkers

BOWNE'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

Although the relationship between the theory of knowledge and the theory of being is not as close in Bowne as it is in Rāmānuja, where they tend to be identified, yet for the American thinker they are inseparably related Bowne writes

> Hence, epistemology, or the doctrine of knowledge, and metaphysics, or the doctrine of real existence, are the two grand divisions of philosophy As already pointed out, these do not admit of any absolute separation, as if the theory of one could be completed without a theory of the other They are, then, different aspects of the whole question rather than mutually independent factors At the same time, they are sufficiently distinct to make it desirable to treat them *separately*[81]

The status of epistemology in Bowne is clear from his account of the aim of philosophy, which is rational com-*prehension of reality The instrument of such comprehen*sion is thought itself proceeding in accordance with certain laws Adherence to these laws is the mark of normal mental activity, *just as their abrogation is the mark of the* abnormal If there were no laws governing thought the distinction between rational and irrational would have no

80 Sri Ramanuja, *The Three Tatvas* p 123

81 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, pp 4 5

basis Thus philosophy is constituted of logic, whose domain is the laws of thought, of epistemology which applies these laws to the problem of knowledge, and of metaphysics which inquires into the final conceptions reached by thought with regard to real existence, specifically concerning man, nature and ultimate reality

The following discussion of Bowne's epistemology is, of course, oriented towards bringing out the resemblance between his views on the subject and those of Rāmānuja's but not to the neglect of the differences between them

BOWNE S TREATMENT OF THE PROBLEMS OF KNOWLEDGE

Experience as the pre-condition of all knowledge

Fundamental to Bowne's epistemology is his theory of experience, experience in its most inclusive sense, as encompassing a world of objects that consists of persons as well as things He writes.

> By experience, then, we mean to world of objects, so far as they can be the subjects of a real or possible experience, and we imply nothing beyond this by way of metaphysics [82]

Starting thus with experience in the widest sense, Bowne believes that the initial experience is of a personal world Further, he believes that all that we experience constitutes an inter connected system From the start, he writes

> We are in a personal world and all our objects are connected with this world in one indivisible system And this world of experience stands absolutely in its own right, and is independent of our metaphysical theories concerning it We may have various theories about it, but the experience itself is what is, and its contents are revealed only in life [83]

The Personal Basis of Experience

To Bowne, then, the personal basis of all experience is the initial and indefeasible fact about it The attempt

82 Borden P Bowne *Personalism* pp 26 27
83 *Ibid* p 25

to consider experience apart from a personal reference has resulted in philosophical aberrations of the most serious sort. Naturalism is a good example. The theory takes its start in the consideration of matter and force under the conditions of space and time with the result at once of having on our hands an insoluble dualism of matter and mind. Start, however, with the recognition of the primacy of the personal world and you avoid the pitfalls of metaphysical dualism and the errors associated with it.

For Bowne as for Rāmānuja experience is thus fundamental, and it is not dissociable from persons. Of course, interpretations of experience differ according to the metaphysical approaches to it; but whatever the approach, the reality of experience is in no way modified. In this respect both Bowne and Rāmānuja are thoroughgoing empiricists. The thrust of experience is always towards reality, moreover a personal reality, and it is hence the pre-condition of knowledge.

STAGES OF KNOWLEDGE

Sensation

Knowledge is initially anchored in sensation. Impressions are produced in the mind by external stimuli and it is these impressions that the mind works over into forms inherent in the nature of mind itself. In this activity the mind transcends the sense fact. For example, says Bowne, if I were struck by a stone, the resulting sensations would consist simply of visual and tactual qualia, together with a feeling of pain If I go on to say that a stone hit me, I have in that very act, transcended the mere sense experience as such and attributed objective existence and causal efficacy to the stone.[84] Subtract these ideas from the experience and "there is nothing left but a succession of sensations in my own consciousness."[85] Bowne uses another

84. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 10

85. *Ibid*, p 10

example to illustrate his point. When we observe a moving body all that we see really is a continuous set of visual appearance at adjacent points of space in successive moments of time. Yet knowledge of the moving body, while it rests upon sense experience, involves a passage from the facts of sense to the notion of an objective and identical thing. "If I suppose," says Bowne, "that I have successive experience of the same thing, the sense fact is merely a similarity of successive sensations."[86] It is impossible to get beyond this unless the sense fact is interpreted via the idea of abidingness and identity. Bowne, like Rāmānuja, is convinced that present in even the simplest experience is a peculiar mental activity, an activity that is synthesizing and ideational. Ideas are not sensations, nor are they modifications of sense They belong, says Bowne, to the unpicturable notions of the understanding.

Consciousness exhibits two orders of movement or combination: one is the sensual order, the other is the rational order. In the first many things come together with no inner connection between them, and the connection tends to recur in accordance with the laws of association. Now association, which may bring together the most diverse things, implies no internal but merely mechanical connection.[87] It is only in the second order that accidental gives way to rational conjunction Here things do not merely come together but belong together. For example, sound and idea are only accidentally associated, while on the other hand the properties of a triangle belong together. "The former might conceivably be separated; the latter are fixed in changeless relations"[88]

Yet if the two orders of sense and reason are distinguishable from one another, it is no part of Bowne's intention to separate them. Thus he writes·

86 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge* p. 12

87. *Ibid*, p 12

88. *Ibid*, p 12

> At the base of our thought life is the life of sense. This is something given. By no effort of ours can we produce this life or modify its laws. This, however, does not mean that sensations are poured into the mind from without, as if things threw them off, or as if they were produced by the nerves and furnished readymade to consciousness. On the contrary, the sensation itself is purely a mental product, an elementary reaction of our sensibility against external action. But these reactions are no products of thought. They result from the structure of our sensibility, and are strictly a datum for the rational nature. If they were not given they could never be produced.[89]

What Bowne is concerned to emphasize is that sensation is not a product of thought, but its basis, and further still, that, as the basis, there is an element of thought present in sensation even at its most elementary level. Sensation counts for knowledge only in and through the action of thought. An exploding Catherine-wheel provides Bowne with a neat example. As a result of the explosion, the impression left on the senses is only a blur. Only when the mind has fixed the impression into a single and abiding meaning does it become an object of thought.[90] Rāmānuja makes the same point in his own way when he speaks of determinate perception, that is, perception coupled with judgment, as alone haviny a meaning. For both thinkers the apprehension of truth, even at the level of sensation, involves the play of thought. If sense experience provides us with a knowledge of objects, it is because the latter have been worked over by thought. Objects are never merely given, they are constructed.

The work of the intellect, as it is assessed in Bowne's epistemology, comes out especially clearly in connection with his discussion of the unity of sensation. Bowne writes:

> Let us suppose the impression to last through a certain time. It is plain that the earlier parts of this

89. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 37.

90 *Ibid*, p. 38

> time are not the later parts. The time, therefore, as occurring is not one but an indefinite manifold. Left to itself it would never become one, for it has no unity in it. Such unity as the time has it owes to the intellect.[91]

Each impression, as it occurs, says Bowne, vanishes with its date, and since the time through which it perdures can be divided indefinitely into moments, the impression likewise is indefinitely divisible and so indefinitely many. Wherein, then, does its unity consist? Bowne's answer is that there is no unity in the impression itself, nor in the time in which it exists. It is only in thought that unity can be found. "The impression as occurring is a continuous flow, and thought transforms it into a fixed idea."[92]

Thought, then, is of the first importance for Bowne; and it is for Rāmānuja as well. Accordingly we turn to the subject in the following section.

Thought

Bowne's view of the function of thought in the knowledge situation is founded on his view of the activity of the mind itself, and is only fully intelligible in terms of this prior view. It is a view utterly opposed to that of Locke and Berkeley, and of empiricism generally, (or so he believes) according to which the mind is a *tabula rasa*, a merely passive recipient of sensation. In opposition to all such views, Bowne is concerned to emphasize the active character of cognition which proceeds to laws inherent in thought itself. While he is not in the least disposed to deny that knowledge is determined by both subject and object, still, in agreement with Kant, he specially emphasizes the importance of the cognitive agent[93] Accordingly he never tires of insisting that thought has laws and knowledge is only knowledge when it is in accord with them. If such

91 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 39

92 *Ibid*, p 40

93 *Ibid*, p 5

laws did not exist, it would be impossible to distinguish rational from irrational thought. Hence the importance of logic, which deals with these laws, for any theory of knowledge.[94]

It may be remarked here that for Bowne, as for Rāmānuja, there are stages of knowledge, or at least appear to be, so that what is known at a higher stage is not known at a lower. The divine knowledge, therefore, which is all comprehensive, exceeds human knowledge, just as a higher stage in the latter exceeds a lower.

> It is plain, says Bowne, that many things may be true for cosmic thought which are not true for our human thinking; and many limitations may be affirmed of the latter which must be denied of the former.[95]

But Bowne's inquiry is focussed primarily upon human thought, though without any illusions concerning the limitations of purely epistemological theorizing. So, then returning to human thought, Bowne points out that in the presentational continuum, which is consciousness at a certain level, events that are hopelessly mixed occur. All that is known about them is that they are facts, a brute given. Bowne here is signalling a stage of mental activity which is comparable to what Rāmānuja calls indeterminate perception. But there is a further aspect of the mental life whose distinguishing character is the apprehension of truth in accord with the laws of normal thought Indeed this is the type of mental activity which is called thought at all.[96]

Bowne writes: "Thought, then, is that form of mental activity whose aim is truth or knowledge."[97] And he goes on to say that "Thought may signify the mental activity, and it may signify the contents grasped through thot activity."[98]

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94 *Ibid*, p. 9

95. Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, pp 8-9

96 *Ibid*, p 9

97 *Ibid*, p 9

98 *Ibid*, p 9

In the latter sense thought encompasses sensations, feelings, in fact the whole universe in so far as it is known. From the standpoint of the peculiar function performed by thought, "thought may be defined as the process whereby the mind works over the raw material of the sensibility into the forms of intelligence."[99]

Bowne himself admits that such a definition is not complete, yet it does call attention, he says, to one of the most important aspects and functions of thought activity in our experience.[100]

Now, in agreement with Rāmānuja, Bowne believes that what is of highest significance in the nature of thought is that it is not only a mental event which ends in itself, but that more than this, it is the apprehension and report of a truth or state of affairs beyond the mental event. Thinking considered as a process is like all occurring events a particular and so likewise are the contents of consciousness, themselves mental events. But a distinction needs to be drawn here, a distinction of vital import. While our thoughts may be viewed as mental events, which in one aspect they are, they must be viewed also in their cognitive capacity, and in that capacity they claim to be revelatory of an order which is itself not created but discovered by thought. In other words thought claims to reveal a common reality. Bowne writes:

> Of course, thinking, as a process, is particular; and the entire contents of consciousness as mental events are particular, but our thoughts, though mental events, claim to be valid for an order of fact or reason which our thoughts do not make but discover, and which is common to all and not merely special to me.[101]

Just how a mental event which is private to me can at the same time reveal an extra-private reality is a mystery which Bowne does not pretend to be able to solve.

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99 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 11

100 *Ibid*, p 11

101 *Ibid*, p. 14

> How a particular thought which, as mental event, is special to me can nevertheless affirm and apprehend something valid for all is no doubt a great mystery; but the fact is so involved in the nature of thought that thought vanishes altogether with its denial.[102]

The defining character of judgment lies precisely here in the extra-personal reference of our thought. If judgment were the merely private association of ideas, it would cease to be judgment and become simply one event among others. It is reference to an order of reality that "constitutes the universality and objectivity of thought, and distinguishes the judgment"—at least, in its intention—from a subjective union of ideas.[103]

Steps Involved in Thought: Notion, Judgment, Inference

According to Bowne three steps or phases are discernible in the intellectual process, that which he calls the notion, the judgment, and inference. All three steps are involved in the constitutive activity of thought, and are dissociable from it. Bowne proceeds to say that for thought terms are signs, but the important thing about such signs is their meaning. And it is this meaning that Bowne calls the notion, or concept or idea. The function of the notion in the economy of thought is "merely to form fixed conceptions which shall enable us to master and express experience."[104] Indeed, fixity is the ideal form of the notion, but this fixity is not something static, for if we speak of a notion as fixed, it is yet a fixity that does not exclude exchange. For example, a notion may first appear as *A* is *A*. Now *A* may be increased by the appearance of a new factor *B*, and so becomes *AB* which itself in turn is fixed as *AB* and not something else.[105] Change, then, introduced into a notion, so far from alienating its fixity, serves to emphasize it. Yet it is true that the contents of a notion may undergo such

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102. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 14.

103 *Ibid*, p 14.

104. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

105 *Ibid.*, pp. 118-19.

drastic change as to destroy its fixity, but in that case what has happened is that a new notion has taken the place of the old. And it continues to be the case that the meanings of the old and new notions are fixed, that is, identical with themselves.[106]

In its progress towards a notion the mind begins with particular things or events as these are immediately is now prepared to do its work which consists in the comparison of particulars and the notation of their common character—such characters are arrived at by a process of abstraction the result of which is a notion or concept. And this notion or concept comes later on to be "extended by generalization to all similar individuals, and the work is complete."[107]

Likeness and difference, agreement and disagreement, these are relations fundamental to judgment, and unintelligible apart from it. And further, since such relations appear even in our most elementary consciousness, it is evident that the latter already contains an element of judgment. In Bowne's view, "any consciousness which has passed beyond the stage of unqualified, unrelated feeling and become a consciousness of something has already reached the stage of judging."[108] A question arises here. Do concepts precede judgment? Bowne's answer is that "some concepts precede some judgments, and some concepts succeed some judgments. The concept is quite as often the product of the judgment as its antecedent"[109]

It is important to be clear about the sense in which judgment may be defined as the comprehension of likeness and difference, agreement and disagreement, for the definition is variously interpretable. It may mean that judgment is a declaration of the agreement or disagreement of

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106 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 119

107. *Ibid*, p 119

108 *Ibid*, p 150

109. *Ibid*, p 152

ideas as mental states; or that it is a declaration concerning the contents of ideas; or finally that it is a declaration concerning the things which the ideas presumably represent. Bowne discards the first sense on the ground that ideas have not the properties of their contents. The thought of ice is not cold and the thought of fire is not hot. These qualities are in the objects and not in the ideas of them Hence it is tempting to say that it is thing and not ideas that are joined in judgment. But the objection to this is that many judgments do not concern things at all, as, for example, in what Bowne calls the subjective sciences. And when judgments are concerned with things, it is not the things themselves that are in thought but the ideas.[110] To Bowne, therefore, judgments deal neither with ideas as mental states, nor with things as extra-mental existences. Instead they deal with the logical contents of ideas. He writes:

> Thought has no way of dealing with things except through ideas, and hence the contents of our ideas must necessarily make up the whole sphere of consciousness. But, on the other hand, we must equally allow that the judgment is never complete until these contents are related to a world of facts or reason which these contents apprehend or reproduce.[111]

It is not only through the judgment that logic is involved in thought, but through inference as well. And even more importantly, for the most part our judgments, Bowne points out, are not given as true in immediate experience or in direct insight. "We reach them," he says, "by analysing or combining other judgments which are given or assumed."[112] Bowne calls this process inference. He further says that "It is another phase of complex movement by which we attain knowledge"[113] Inference is the mark of human thought, for if our knowledge were perfect, that is

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110 Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, pp. 155-56

111 *Ibid*, p 156

112. *Ibid*, p 166

113 *Ibid*, p 166.

to say, if we were not finite creatures, inference would be merely otiose.

Inferential reasoning consists in drawing from one or more judgments, called premises, certain others called conclusions whose truth depends upon the truth of the premises. But the validity of an inference is not so dependent. It may be valid irrespective of the truth of premises or conclusion, for validity is a formal property or reasoning and consists in purely logical relations from untrue or fictitious premises.

> They do not, of course, become true thereby, but their necessary connection with the premises is shown; and this connection, as in the reduction to absurdity, may be used for overthrowing the premises themselves.[114]

If the falsehood of both premises and conclusion is quite compatible with the validity of the inference, it is the case also that the truth of both is no guarantee of the validity of the inference. Further, Bowne, points out, it is not always possible to express adequately the premises of an inference except in formal sciences such as mathematics of sciences that have considerable mathematical formulation. A great deal of valid reasoning may be carried on which does not admit of adequate formal statement. In such cases Bowne writes:

> The grounds of the inference are too subtle, delicate, complex for verbal expression. For instance, how do we recognize a face or discern the trustworthiness of a friend? There is here an action of the whole mind, with its furniture of experience and tendency, which would only be caricatured by syllogistic formulation. Much of our practical reasoning is of this sort It may be perfectly valid but it cannot be formulated[115]

114 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 166

115 *Ibid*, p 179

In all this Bowne is emphasizing the fact that inference cannot be confined to purely formal reasoning, but plays a role in practical life and in this role probability inevitably attaches to it. Classify individuals under what universals we will, they may possess their unique incommunicable character, so that reasoning about them as a class is beset with all the hazards of probable inference. These hazards arise especially in situations which admit only of subjective estimates or in cases where there is a choice of many possible premises. The personal equation is apt to colour the estimate or affect the choice of premises. Purely logical reasoning may as often as not mislead us in the practical situations of life. No amount of logic, says Bowne, "could compel an Irish Catholic and an Irish Protestant to draw the same conclusions from Oliver Cromwell's life."[116] The syllogism plays a very small part in the actual reasonings of life.

THE CATEGORIES OF THOUGHT

In its commerce with objects the mind operates in certain ways. That these ways have as their object the establishment of rational relationships is not surprising, since thought is essentially a relating activity[117] Further yet, it is for Bowne an organic activity. He will have nothing to do with the common sense conception according to which Thought is but a passive reflection of existing objects and relations.[118] Nor does he look kindly upon the empiricist attempt to construe thought in terms of "a mechanical juxtaposition of mutually external elements."[119] There can be no thought without an organic synthesis within the unity of the mind itself.

Now the categories with which the mind operates do not as such appear in consciousness. Just as we walk with-

116. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 181.
117. *Ibid*, p. 62
118. *Ibid*, p 60.
119. *Ibid*, p 60

out being aware of the muscles in our legs, indeed in entire ignorance of them, so we may think in entire ignorance of the principles which underlie and determine thinking. If these principles are to be brought to light and understood, it is only by means of an analysis of the products of thought. It is no use appealing here, says Bowne, to the natural or unsophisticated consciousness, a fact which

> it is important to bear in mind in the present inquiry, as it often happens that superficial students fancy the categories, as determining principles of intelligence, are sufficiently discredited by the fact that they are not revealed in the unreflective consciousness.[120]

The Meaning of Categories

The categories are immanent mental principles whose operation is in accord with what are themselves mental laws[121] If they are to be observed, it is not by the senses but the mental product in which they manifest themselves. The categories determine the form of knowing. But this is not to say that the categories, as form-determining, are abstract, vacuous, or inert. So Bowne writes:

> They are not empty forms of the pigeon-hole type into which the mind sorts its experience; but they are the organic principles by which experience is built up. They are as necessary to the understanding of experience as the law of growth is necessary to the understanding of organic form and they are equally unpicturable.[122]

The categories thus are not just names, and their role in thought is a highly involved one, for thinking itself involves "a highly complex activity of determination and relation, and the norms of this activity must be immanent in

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120 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 60

121 *Ibid*, p 61

122 *Ibid*, p 61

the activity itself."[123] Let us now look at each of Bowne's Categories in turn.

The Category of Relation

We have seen that for Bowne, thought is essentially a relating activity and its progress "consists largely in establishing rational relations among the raw materials of our experience."[124] Objects are to a great extent defined and constituted by their relations, and if these were eliminated nothing articulate would remain. Now Bowne argues that it is a mistake to assume that without the activity of thought objects might still maintain their relation to the mind. Such a view is erroneous, for Bowne says

> the relation of things, so far as they exist for thought, are instituted by thought, and the relations instituted can only be viewed as objective expressions of principles immanent in thought itself.[125]

It is here in connection with the relating activity of thought that the idealistic side of Bowne's epistemology is especially in evidence. "Things," he says, "can be related for our thought only as they are related by our thought."[126] Relations are known or revealed only in the relating activity, and this activity is of the mind. Indeed, in the last analysis relations would not exist without a mind that does the relating, so, that, Bowne concludes, the "world of related things can exist only in and through a relating cosmic intelligence."[127] None of the important relations which constitute knowledge exists in the sensory world. The case is rather that they are contributed by the understanding to the formation and interpretation of experience. So the relations of time, space, causality, identity and the like, are not given in sensation, but are the mind-

123. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 61.

124. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

125. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

126. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

127. *Ibid.*, p 62.

contributed forms which experience assumes in passing from impressions to objects.

The Category of Likeness and Unlikeness

The discernment of likeness among objects does not consist of the passive reception of impressions from the outside, but consists of such activities as fixation, discrimination, comparison and judgment If it is the case, Bowne points out, that likeness may exist apart from its recognition, the recognition of likeness or any other relation is possible only through the activity of the mind. Of likeness and unlikeness he writes:

> These ideas arise only as two or more experiences or objects are at once discriminated and compared in the same act of consciousness. When this act, which cannot be construed or further described, is performed, then there arises the idea of likeness or unlikeness, according to the nature of the objects.[128]

The Category of Time

Time, as we shall see, constitutes one of the crucial problems of Bowne's metaphysics. But it constitutes also an epistemological problem, for as Bowne says, "whether time be ontologically real or not, apparent time is an undeniable element of experience."[129] Ultimately real or not, time is a concern of the epistemologist. Now, it is the mind itself which relates events under the form of time.

> Time is primarily a law of thought whereby the mind relates events under the form of antecedence and sequence, and thus makes the temporal experience possible. Given the temporal experience, we may by abstraction get the idea of time; but the temporal experience itself is possible only through a peculiar relating activity of thought.[130]

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128 Borden P. Bowne, *Introduction to Psychological Theory*, (Harper & Brothers, 1886), p 127

129 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 44

130 *Ibid*, p 66

Thus the essential elements of time are antecedence and sequence; and its dimensions are past, present and future.[131] The necessity of the temporal relation, as Bowne indicates in the passage quoted above, is a necessity that lies in the mind and not in events. As the law or scheme relating all events, time is considered to be one, infinite and all-embracing. "But the unity and infinity of time are only consequences of the fact that the law of synthesis is one and extends to all events.[132]

Bowne thinks of this unity and infinity of time as commonly lying latent in the background of our thoughts, so that time is not something imposed upon our thought from without, nor is the consciousness of time a mere passive mirroring of objective succession. "Time," Bowne writes, "rests ultimately upon a mental activity whereby the contents of consciousness are temporally related to one another and to the abiding self."[133] The result is "the consciousness of subjective time"[134] Further, "this form of relation is next extended to the cosmic order, and thus the belief in objective time arises."[135] But time is primarily a law of mental synthesis and it is in terms of this law that we relate events. The situation with regard to time, then, is this. If objective time does not exist, there is no alternative but to suppose that time is a mental product; on the other hand, if objective time does exist, it can only be known through a subjective activity according to a subjective law.[136]

The Category of Number

To Bowne number is "pre-eminently the out come of

131 Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge,* p 66
132 *Ibid*, p 68
133 *Ibid*, p. 69
134 *Ibid*, p. 69
135 *Ibid*, p. 69
136 *Ibid*, p 70

mental activity."[137] It is not a simple consequence of sense experience, as sensationalism would have it. The very notion of number involves the recognition of recurrence and succession. Bowne writes:

> Number is no property of things in themselves, but only of things as united by the mind in numerical relations. Nor can we allow that unity attaches to the sense object. The mind establishes its own unit, as appears from the fact that the same object may be one or many, according to the unit which the mind adopts.[138]

True, events in experience can be counted, but they become counted only through a new and peculiar form of mental action upon experience, an action that involves the establishment of a unity and a process of counting. And it is through this process that number is grasped. In a word, "number exists only as things are united by the mind in numerical relations."[139] It is not a passive affection of the sensibility but the law and genesis of number lie in the mind itself. Bowne further is concerned to emphasize the relativity of number. In concrete application number presupposes classification, and whatever units are employed in this activity they are relative and formal. It is clear that "mutual externality of parts and the resulting indefinite divisibility of any assumed unit forbid us to find any ultimate unit in space and time.[140]

The Category of Space

Neither the naive realist view of space, according to which we see things in space because they are in space, nor the associationist view according to which our sensations by their very nature give rise to the idea of space, is, according to Bowne, tenable. On the contrary space exists for the mind only when the mind endows objects with

137. *Ibid*, p. 70

138 Borden P Bowne, *Introduction to Psychological Theory*, p 154.

139 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 71.

140 *Ibid*, p 73

space relations. If it were not for the space relating activity of thought spatial experience would not occur.

> However real . . . space may be as an objective fact, it can exist for the mind only as we give our objects space relations. Until we relate them spatially they are not in space for us. Space, like time, is primarily a law of mental synthesis, whereby the mind relates its coexistent objects under the form of mutual externality. Secondarily, space is the abstract form of external experience.[141]

Bowne's theory of space is no more free of the problem of how it is that we have spatial intuition at all than any other theory. He recognizes that the stream of thought as a psychological process has no spatial qualities. "There may be ideas of bulk, but there are no bulky ideas."[142] The introduction of spatial qualities bodily into consciousness would be incompatible with the unity of consciousness. Since, then, the stream of thought has no spatial qualities, how explain the fact that we do have ideas of bulk, distance and the like. Bowne is perfectly frank in admitting that we do not know.

Motion

Involved in the categories of both space and time, but not identical with either is the category of motion. Just as there is no motion if we take only the co-existent points of space, so there is no motion if we take only the successive moments of time We get motion only if we define it as change of place, or as the passage of a body from one place to another. But there is some thing more that needs to be borne in mind here. As Bowne writes:

> If I suppose I see a moving body, the sense fact is only a continuous set of visual appearances at adjacent points of space in successive moments of time To transform this into a moving body, I must pass from

141. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 74

142 *Ibid*, p 74

> the fact of sense to the notion of an objective and identical thing.[143]

In other words the experience of motion involves an activity of the mind.

Quantity

The quantity of anything, no matter what, is primarily its magnitude, whether of extension, duration, or intensity. Described in this way there is nothing relative about quantity. It is only when we come to measure quantity that there is no absolute unit of quantity. Nothing is great or small absolutely. Further, Bowne points out, the notion of quantity moves within the field of qualitative likeness. Indeed, quantity is a less basic category than quality. The first being, according to Bowne, a derivative of the other. He will have nothing to do with the form of reductionism which seeks to explain quality in terms of quantity. He writes:

> Quantitative likeness and unlikeness are perceived when two or more cases of a common quality are compared. Here the mind comparing two or more cases perceives a peculiar identity of changes in its inner states as it passes from one to another, which change, moreover, is renounced when the order of mental movement is reversed. This fact is the basis of all ideas of quantitative equivalence, or of greater and less in quantity. But these ideas, though ultimately based upon the sensibility, are not functions of the sensibility. They rather represent a new and higher form of mental function.[144]

In Bowne's view, therefore, quantity the master-idea of physics, is itself an expression of the constitutive action of the mind. Actually all the categories we have so far considered, namely, space, time, motion and quantity, with number for their measure, are the great elementary

143. Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 10

144. Borden P. Bowne, *Introduction to Psychological Theory*, p 127.

categories of mechanical science, providing the basis of pure mathematics and kinetics and thereby, the groundwork of physical science. However, "these categories alone would not carry us beyond groundless events and disconnected appearances."[145] If the visible world is a world of things and not a set of shifting and dissolving appearances without unity or identity, it is because of the metaphysical categories like being, identity, and causality. These categories are never present in the sense, but are the unpicturable notions of intelligence. Since Bowne treats of them not only in his metaphysics but in his theory of knowledge, we shall say something about them here.

Being

Among the metaphysical categories which Bowne considers important for knowledge the category of being comes first He starts out by saying that in the world of events all occurrences are real; indeed, their occurrence is their reality. Further, in the world of ideas likewise "any conceptual object whatever has a sort of existence."[146] Again, in the world of consciousness actual thoughts and feelings are considered to be real, in distinction from others which, as not actual, are unreal. In the broadest sense, then, being includes everything, that is, thought and its objects alike, for all of these exist in some fashion.

> In this general use of the term, the mind posits itself and all its acts and objects as numbers of a system of reality without further specifications. All that is involved in it is a possible objectivity for thought. This act of positing results necessarily from the antithesis between thought and its object. Thought as act does not make but reveals its object; and even when thought grasps itself, it reveals itself as a real activity. Even the special to me has an aspect which makes it, at least potentially, common to all; for it is one phase

145 Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 81.

146 Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 82

> or factor of the real system of things and events. In this sense thought presupposes being and has no significance without reference to being. In this reference we have the most general expression of that objectivity which we have seen to inhere in the nature of thought.[147]

Being in this, its largest sense, while it implies a possible objectivity of thought, does not thereby imply any substantiality or identity in the object. At this stage being is compatible with the extremest solipsism, for it is the same being whether it is an abiding reality or whether it expresses itself as objective appearance, existing only in the perception thereof. For spontaneous thought, however, being is a fundamental category, that is, thought has always an outer reference. Qualities are always qualities of something. But while our objective experience is for Bowne, proof that being exists, just as logically there can be no doubt of being, yet objective experience is absolutely inarticulate and nothing for intelligence until it is fixed and defined with reference to an abiding and independent meaning.[148] And such meaning is impossible without the categorical activity of the mind.

According to Bowne the category of being appears in three leading forms, namely, thing, soul and God. In all three, being is the real ground and principle of unity in the manifestations of the respective realms [149]

Quality

The thought of being in abstraction is only the empty form of ground and objectivity. If mere being as such is taken to be real, thought itself vanishes. It is only being as endowed with qualities and attributes that is actual. Thus pure being is objectively nothing. Subjectively it is the bare

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147 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 82.

148 *Ibid*, p 83.

149. *Ibid*, p 84

category of objective position. There is a double aspect to the concrete act of positing. First, something is posited as real, and thus being is affirmed. But if it is asked what this real thing is, the only answer possible is in terms of its qualities. The two sides are essential to the act of positing, just as a judgment is nothing without both subject and predicate. In the judgment we posit a subject which we unfold in the predicate, and neither is anything apart from the other. So reality is conceived through its attributes, and only so, and the attributes exist only in the reality. Either is an unreal abstraction apart from the other.

It is this relation of being and quality, substance and attribute, that underlies our attributive judgments, as it underlies all our spontaneous thinking about the external world. The relation in its grammatical form of noun and adjective in one of the fundamental factors of language.[150] Now the senses give us only qualities, but these qualities form groups by association, and all that we mean by a thing is simply such a group.

What the notion of being or substance adds to the sense contents is nothing but an objective principle of ground and unity. And being in some form is a necessity of thought. Without it qualities would be nothing but the flux of sensation. Since thought is largely concerned with sense objects

> our conceptions of qualities are mainly of the passive and spatial type. But as the thought of being grows more dynamic, or as we rise to the conception of spiritual being, our thought of qualities takes on the form of powers energies, capacities, faculties, etc.[151]

Here, again, in connection with the category of quality, Bowne is concerned to emphasize the synthetic and interpretative action of the mind. Qualities at the level of mere sense experience are inert and discontinuous. It is only as the mind interprets them into a continuous world of things

150. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 86.

151. *Ibid*, p. 87.

on its own rational warrant that they are seen as the manifestations of a single dynamic reality.

Identity

The principle of identity is valid not only for thought, but for an extra-mental reality. That is, it is not a logical and metaphysical category. To Bowne identity may signify either equivalence of logical value, in other words, sameness of meaning, or it may signify metaphysical continuity of being. The one provides that our thoughts shall have fixed meanings, while the other applies to concrete reality. Without the first there could be no consistency of thought and without the second "experience would vanish into a groundless flux of perishing events."[152]

The fundamental character of the notion of identity is evident from the fact that, in Bowne's words, "until the notion of an identical subject is thrown into the flow of sense-experience there can be no judpment of any kind."[153] Identity rules all experience as well as all knowledge. There is nothing whatever in the sensations," says Bowne,

> which calls for the assumption of an identical subject; and if there were a mind without any necessity of rationalizing its experience, it might have a constant repetition of similar sensations, without the least suspicion of an identical subject[154]

Identity, thus, is a mental addition to the sensible experience.

Causality

Apart from the ideas of quality, identity and permanence, being itself is unthinkable. But even more primal than these is causality the essential meaning of which is, according to Bowne, dynamic determination A logical as

152 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 88

153 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p 507

154 *Ibid*, p 507.

well as metaphysical category, causality, like identity, is bound up with the very notion of being. For Bowne, next to purpose, this is the most important category. We shall have more to say about causality in our chapter on Bowne's metaphysics. Here we shall confine ourselves to nothing what Bowne takes to be illustrations of the notion. He singles out the self-determination of a free agent; the determination of the consequent by the antecedent; and finally the mutual determination of different things. In the first we find freedom; in the second the connection of sequences; and in the third the connection of co-existences, or the interaction of things. It is evident therefore that causality is not only metaphysical but an epistemological category. As such, it is the very underpinning of knowledge.

Necessity

Necessity, Bowne, explains, may mean simply a factual condition of thought without which thought could not go on Or it may express merely a logical relation, as of premises and cosclusion, or of subject and predicate. Or it may characterize a proposition which cannot be denied without contradiction or without violating some clear intuition of reason. As referring to the nature of things, necessity is intimately tied to identity, in fact hardly distinguishable from it: for to think of a thing at all we must think of it as what it is, as A; and hence it seems as if there is more necessity whereby A is A.[155] This seems like necessitarianism, yet Bowne insists that the idea of freedom is as necessary as the idea of necessity. The discussion of Bowne's attempt to reconcile the two shall be left to a later chapter.

Possibility

Concerning possibility, which Bowne considers to be a doubtful category, he declares that it derives what clear meaning it possesses from the self-determination of a free

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155 Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 102.

agent. In ordinary usage, he remarks, "That is possible which involves no controdiction.[156] In this logical sense possibility means merely conceivability. But the term may be used also to express our ignorance, as when we say that is possible which, for all we know, may happen or may have happened. Still another meaning of possibility is evident in its application to an order of conditioned events. So long as the condition is unfulfilled the event is impossible, and when it is fulfilled the event is not only possible but actual.

Purpose

In Bowne's view the categories so far considered, while they are indispensable mental means to rendering objects intelligible, still operate within a world of relatively isolated things and events, and provide for no system. Such provision is best achieved by the category of purpose by which causality is elevated "to intelligent and volitional causality."[157]

The principle needed for a coherent, internal unity and systematization of our experience is not to be found in impersonal or mechanical causation. Causation of this sort "loses itself in the infinite regress," and thus "fails to reach any true unity."[158]

Till reason raises itself above the mechanical categories and accepts the conception of self-determining and intelligent personality as the supreme category of being and causation, it is bound to remain unstable and unfilfilled Moreover, apart from its metaphysical there is an empirical reason for affirming purpose. The reason is to be found primarily in our experience of intelligence and secondarily in the varied peculiarities of objective experience which are said to point to intelligence as their cause Accordingly Bowne finds that purpose is one of the categories involved

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156 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 103

157 *Ibid*, p 104

158 *Ibid*, p 105.

in the nature of intelligence itself. Our experience of intelligence is always of an activity taking on the purposive form. Everywhere the mind seeks to relate its objects as means and ends, to comprise them is a scheme of purpose or an all-embracing plan. "Thought must become teleological before it can complete itself,"[159] says Bowne.

The crucial character of purpose as a principle of thought is a conclusion arrived at reflectively, that is, it is arrived at only as thought fails to find equilibrium in mechanical causality and moves on to a causality patterned after volition. Unless it embraces the category of purpose, thought cannot maintain itself and "attain to systematic completeness."[160]

Conclusion

The foregoing recapitulation of Bowne's treatment of the categories will have made plain the importance he attaches to mind as agent and thought as creativity. Speaking of the categories in general, he says,

> That articulate experience is impossible without a constitutive action of the mind whereby the sense elements are given a rational form, is clear. That this activity must proceed according to principles immanent in intellect itself is equally plain. That the source of these principles cannot be found in anything external to the mind is likewise manifest. They are not conscious possessions of the mind prior to all experience, but they reveal themselves in and through experience which they alone make possible.[161]

Again, this time in the Metaphysics, he declares:

> All our knowledge of the outer world, both the frame work and the filling-up alike, is an expression of mind's inner nature, and have further seen that the

159 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 107.

160 *Ibid*, p 108

161 *Ibid*, p 364

constructive action of the mind is such as to give the system qualities which it has only in the mind itself."[162]

But while Bowne thus emphasizes the ultimacy of mind and its creative character, he is also at pains to emphasize that the mind does not create the categories. They lie in the nature of mind, neither imposed upon it from without nor from within In this sense we may say even that the mind is passive, though in no other sense. Mind thus is not an arbitrarily creative agent The most important factor in knowing is still the object. "Knowledge is of the object, and the object must determine knowledge"[163] If in his exposition, it appears as if the object were only a projection of mental conceptions, this appearance, says Bowne, has a reason. However real the object may be, it becomes an object for us only through our own activity. "The thing-world must be reproduced in the thought-world, and the forms of the thing-world must take on the forms of the thought-world"[164] If the thoughts which arise in the mind do grasp existing things, this is possible only because there is an essential identity between the forms of thought and the forms of things

While there is nothing like Bowne's elaborate categorical scheme to be found in Rāmānuja, still, as we have seen, there is the same insistence in the Indian thinker that without the activity of the mind (intelligence), sense experience is incapable of yielding intelligible knowledge

THE SELF KNOWLEDGE

No one more than Bowne has developed the implications of the self for knowledge. In fact, for him the self is the chief key to understanding reality Of course this view is foreshadowed, indeed involved in his treatment of the categories And he writes in *Personalism* ·

162 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p 492
163 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 116
164 *Ibid*, p 116

> Epistemology shows that it (the world) is all an inarticulate, phantasmagoric flux or dissolving view until thought brings into it its rational principles and fixes and interprets it. The sense world, so far as it is articulate, is already a thought world. Its permanences and identities are products of thought. The complex system of relations whereby it is defined and articulated is a thought product, which can in no way be given to sense. The far-reaching inferences whereby our spontaneous thought of the world is so profoundly transformed, are something which exist for neither eye nor ear, but for thought only. The world of science differs from the world of sense as widely as the conceptions of the astronomer differ from the algebraic signs by which he expresses them.[165]

Thus the sense world becomes meaningful only as the mind reacts upon it and by laws immanent to itself proceeds to build up the rational order of experience.[166] And this is as much to say that what brings about an intelligible relationship between thought and its objects is the knowing self. Without the self knowledge would be impossible, for knowledge is always for a subject and the subject is the self. The affinity between Bowne and Rāmānuja at this point is complete.

Now in looking around for the principle of permanence which, he holds, is at the basis of all knowledge, he rejects such things as the Ego Matter, Substances and even Being. Each of these raises difficulties peculiar to itself and all of them suffer from being abstract and intellectualistic. It is the self and the self alone that provides Bowne with that principle of permanence which he is in search of. It is not the abstract self but the real active self of living experience. He writes:

> The self is not to be abstractly taken. It is the living self in the midst of its experiences, possessing, directing, controlling both itself and them; and this self is not open to the objection of barrenness and worthlessness, being simply what we all experience when we

165. Borden P. Bowne, *Personalism*, p. 68
166 *Ibid*, p 69.

> say me or mine. The self can never be more than verbally denied, and even its verbal deniers have always retained the fact. The language of the personal ilfe would be impossible otherwise.[167]

To Bowne accordingly the master principle of epistemology as of metaphysics is the self in the midst of its experiences. And Rāmānuja takes much the same view.

THE PLACE OF AUTHORITY IN KNOWLEDGE

It is with considerable reservations that Bowne assigns a place to authority in knowledge. But he does assign it a place and there is thus further ground for comparison between him and Rāmānuja. For both thinkers there is a body of revealed writing, a scripture, whose authority is such as to constitute a valid source of knowledge. But the authority of revelation in Bowne as in Rāmānuja rests in the last analysis upon tested experience; in Bowne's case the tested experience of the Christian community. The problem of authority is one "which can never be settled except in practice,"[168] Bowne says, and the Indian thinker would have agreed with him. "To attempt to discuss authority in an abstract way, and get it drawn out on logical formulae, always ends in confusion."[169] Bowne sums up his position in this matter as follows:

> We have the authority of the Church and the Bible, the authority of the religious community, all the work of God, including great conflicts, vital functions, but there is no possibility of separation. I do not believe for instance, that any church would long consent to accept statements in the Bible which were agreed upon as distinctly contradictory to reason and conscience. On the other hand, I do not believe that reason and conscience would very long support themselves without the use of the Bible. I do not believe that either one of them would support themselves without the Christian

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167 Borden P Bowne, *Personalism*, pp. 262-63.
168 George Elliot, "The Orthodoxy of Bowne", (*The Methodist Review*, May-June, 1922), pp. 407-408.
169 *Ibid*, pp 407-08.

life were going on.[170]

INTUITION

Neither Bowne nor Rāmānuja can be called intuitionists in their theory of knowledge, but both thinkers assign great importance to intuition in "coming to knowledge." To both knowledge is of the nature of certainty and not merely heuristic. In Bowne's view the certainty of the categories is a certainty guaranteed by intuition which provides a criterion or standard which itself can never be a matter of deduction.

> It must be judged by itself, by its own self-evidence. And this self-evidence can be discovered and announced only by the mind. Ultimate principles must be accepted on the authority of the mind, for there is nothing else on which to found them [171]

No passage from the particular to the universal would be possible if there were no self-evident principles which the mind grasps without the intermediary of discursive reason. Unless this were so, "proof would never come to an end and nothing would be proved."[172] Thus Bowne writes that "either we have to credit the mind with a power of knowing some things on its own account and warrant.... or hold that we have no ground for believing that any truth is strictly universal."[173]

On this latter, empirical view, there is no accounting for mathematics The validity of mathematics does not appear to be conditioned by time or place, and mathematical truths appear to have no source other than the mind itself. But it is important to bear in mind that truth so apprehended is not "something above intelligence, but only above the human limitations of intelligence"[174]

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170 George Elliot, "The Orthodoxy of Bowne", (*The Methodist Review*, May-June, 1922), pp 407-408.

171 Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p 519

172 Borden P. Bowne, *Introduction to Psychological Theory*, p. 294.

173 *Ibid*, p 294

174. Borden P. Bowne, *Philosophy of Theism*, pp. 77-78

GOD'S KNOWLEDGE

Rounding out Bowne's theory of knowledge is his conception of the Supreme Reason. "A rational cosmos," he sys, "is the implicit assumption of objective cognition."[175] Bowne's discussion of the categories is designed, as we have seen, to demonstrate that we know the external phenomenal world only as the mind works over the appreances and projects the resulting conceptions under the form of the categories of thought. Yet, "if the knowledge is to have any validity, the laws of thought must be laws of the universe itself."[176] Implied then in human knowledye is a rational or knowable universe; a knowing human mind; an identity of the categories of human thought with the principles of cosmic being; an adjustment of the inner to the outer in such a way that the mind reacting according to its nature to external stimuli produces of itself thought that truly reproduces the objective fact; and finally an identity of rational nature in all human beings. With regard to this last Bowne observes that "if human reason were many, and not one, there would be an end to thought.[177]

To Bowne the universe as we know it is a vast system of related beings variously categorized by the intellect, so that the universe has no meaning apart from intelligence. Things are known by their relations and have no existence apart from a constitutive intelligence. Thus Bowne writes:

> But the universe as we know it is essentially a vast system of relations under the various categories of the intellect; and such a universe would have neither meaning nor existence apart from intelligence. It does not avail against this conclusion to say that, besides the relations there are real things in relations; for those themselves are defined and constituted by their relations, so that their existence apart from a constitutive intelligence becomes an absurdity [178]

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175 Borden P Bowne, *Philosophy of Theism*, p 64
176 *Ibid*, p 65
177 *Ibid.*, p 65
178 *Ibid*, pp 79-80

If the real as known exists only in and for intelligence, yet this intelligence in and for which the universe exists is not ours. And since it is not ours there must be a cosmic intelligence as its abiding condition, and in reference to which alone the affirmation of a universe has any *meaning*.[179]

So for Bowne as for Rāmānuja, God's knowledge is involved in all aspects of human thought and knowledge. God is an immanent reality without whose presence knowledge would be impossible. In understanding the laws of the universe we are really understanding the laws of God. The greater our insight into the relations of things the greater our knowledge of the divine mind as it operates in working out the details of the creation.

THE DUALISM OF THOUGHT AND THING

In Bowne as in Rāmānuja there is the same insistence that thought always refers to something beyond itself. Thought implies consciousness and consciousness without objects is just nothing.

> In fact, consciousness is no simple homogeneous mental state antecedent to its objects, or apart from objecs ; it arises only in connection with particular objects, and is nothing by itself. When consciousness is empty of objects, there is just nothing left.[180]

Both Rāmānuja and Bowne emphasize the importance of the object for consciousness, but they differ with regard to the relation between the two. Unlike Rāmānuja, whose theory may be characterized as a species of direct realism, since for him the object is directly present to consciousness, Bowne discards a monistic in favour of a dualistic epistemology. To him dualism is alone capable of explaining truth and error. Whatever the relation between thought

179 Borden P. Bowne, *Theism*, pp. 143-144.

180. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 19.

and being may in ultimate reality, it is clear to Bowne that at the human level dualism is inescapable. Thus he writes:

> From the standpoint of the Absolute, things may possibly be conceptions; but from the human standpoint it is impossible to identify things with our conceptions. Their conceptual existence in our thought is not their real existence. They do not begin to exist when we conceive them, nor do they cease to exist when we go to sleep. From the human standpoint, then, there is an ineradicable dualism of thought and thing.[181]

Yet along with this intransigent dualism of Bowne, there goes a theory according to which, as we have seen, knowledge is impossible without the categories, that is, *a priori* principles contributed by the mind from within itself.

> Hence, (Bowne says) it follows that our apparent knowledge can have no objective validity unless our objects themselves are cast in the moulds of thought, or unless the laws and categories of thought are also laws and categories of being[182]

So there is a thought series and thing series, and unless there were an essential correspondence between them, knowledge would remain an inexplicable mystery, assuming knowledge occurred at all. Now it would seem that given the creative role assigned to the mind by Bowne, that objects would be largely the product of mind. But this conclusion, at least at the epistemological level, is one that Bowne rejects without qualification.

Historically the relation between the two orders of being, namely the thought series and the thing series, has been an ever recurring problem, as recurring as the attempt to solve it by the outright identification of the two series Either thought has been reduced to thing, as in materialism, or thing to thought, as in Berkeleyan idealism Both have been conspicuous for their lack of success

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181 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 296

182 *Ibid*, pp 296-297

The materialist reduction leads only to scepticism, as Bowne is concerned to show. As a theory of knowledge materialism is obliged to posit "the invisible things of metaphysical theory," for it is obvious that "this chair, this pen, *this paper, and no collection of similar things, could ever* produce a knowledge of themselves.[183] In what then does the activity of these invisible things (protons, electrons, forces, etc.) consist ? It consists in the last analysis in motion, but thought, says Bowne, cannot be identified with *motion* or any configuration of motions. Even the slightest "acquaintance with the nature of thought can never be put together from the outside in any such way."[184] Hence the *failure of materialism from the start to explain thought and* the personal in terms of brute and impersonal entities like protons or electrons, or still more minute particles of matter. Further, how on the basis of a materialistic epistemology, is one to explain error and truth ?

> The ideal distinctions between truth and error, rational and irrational, are meaningless. One notion is as necessary as any other, and as good as any other *while it lasts.* Scepticism, *rather than knowledge is* possible on this view.[185]

Another form of materialist argument, one that especially arouses Bowne's scorn, is that according to which thought is produced from a kind of mind stuff. Of this, he writes :

> There *has also* been a crude fancy that thought originates in a kind of raw material, 'mind stuff,' and that tion, until the order of conscious thought finally emerges. Hence it has been viewed as a very simple thing to *produce a world of conscious persons from a world of* things, which are not only unconscious, but are essentially unrelated to consciousness. Recipes for the

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183. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 293

184 *Ibid*, pp. 298-299.

185 *Ibid*, p. 300.

process abound; but when reduced to their net value they turn out to be purely verbal.[186]

If Bowne pronounces the materialist effort to explain away the duality of experience and utter failure, he does not regard the idealistic effort as any more successful. Thought is no more productive of things than things are of thought. The theory is variously interpretable.

> It may mean that things are nothing but a system of presentations, as in the common view of Berkeley's theory, and it may mean that thought is the cause and source of things.[187]

But both these views in Bowne's opinion are ambiguous. He says:

> In the first view it is not plain where and for whom the order of presentation exists. If it be independent of finite minds our knowledge of it is not explained.... If it depends on finite minds, then each mind makes its own world. In the second view mentioned [that of Thought being the cause and source of things], it is not plain whether finite thought or absolue thought be the cause of things. The former view is absurd [for it results in solipsism], and the latter does not advance the problems......(for) unfortunately it has never been made clear how these high considerations [of the Absolute Thought] solve the problem of human knowing. [Yet] this is the question of immediate interest."[188]

It is not only the materialistic or Berkeleyan solution of the problem of knowledge that Bowne finds unsatisfactory, but other idealistic solutions as well, for example those of Kant, Fichte and Hegel. In arguing that things-in-themselves are external to thought, Kant wrongly supposed it followed that they were also independent of all thought, and wound up with the impossible doctrine of the unknowable. Fichte gets rid of the unknowable with the unfortunate result that for him "reality became thought, and

186 Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 299

187. *Ibid*, p 301

188 *Ibid*, pp 301-302.

thought became all-embracing and all in all."[189] Traditional idealism with its thesis that there can be no existence beyond thought finds its logical outcome in Hegel's attempt to explain everything within thought. Hegal, says Bowne, "sought to show principles of movement and development in thought itself, whereby it must necessarily pass through the various forms of existence until it emerges as absolute spirit."[190]

Such an attempt to identify thought and being, to deduce the concrete world from pure thought, is repugnant to Bowne. For in his view the upshot of the Hegelian system is thought without a thinker, whereas the fact is that the one without the other is an impossibility.

In his own solution of the problem of the relation between thought and thing, Bowne steers an extremely delicate course between idealism and realism; so delicate indeed that it sometimes seems as if he himself embraces the traditional idealistic epistemology. Yet he never tires of asseverating the inescapability of dualism. Dualism is his starting point, whether he is discussing psychology or logic or epistemology. First of all there is his emphasis upon consciousness. He says:

> All knowledge begins at home. All that we know is known in consciousness, and whatever cannot report itself there must remain forever unknown. All that is known of the outer world, is known only through modifications of consciousness.[191]

This has an idealistic ring, but he is equally concerned to point out the necessary duality that exists in the realm of human thought. Thus he writes:

> The general form under which consciousness exists is that of the antithesis of subject and object; that is

189. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 303

190. *Ibid*, p. 303.

191. Borden P. Bowne, *The Philosophy of Herbert Spencer*, p. 167.

> the object of which we are conscious must be distinguished from self as its subject, and objectified to self either as its state or act, or as a quality of external things.[192]

This distinction is for Bowne primal. He says:

> When this primal distinction is sharply made, we have a clear consciousness; when it is vaguely made, we have an indefinite consciousness; and when it is altogether lacking, we have nothing that can be called consciousness at all. For to be conscious, we must be conscious of something; and we are conscious of that something only as we distinguish it from self, and place it over against self as our object.[193]

In explaining his own position with regard to the relation of thought and thing, Bowne calls attention to two aspects of Thought. He says that thought may mean either the psychological process called thinking or the rational contents grasped in that process.[194] For example, the thought of a triangle may refer to the mental activity of the conception or it may refer to the contents apprehended.[195]

Thought taken as a content rather than an event is said by Bowne to be identical with being As an event it cannot be so identified. He writes:

> Thought, viewed as the process of conceiving, reflecting, in which our mental life so largely consists, is in no sense identical with things. No particular occurrence whatever in the individual consciousness is to be mistaken for objective reality. Our thoughts as mental acts, or mental products, are never things; it is only their logical contents which are things.[196]

Bowne holds further that it is only with these logical contents that the mind is alike to deal; they alone are sub-

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192. Borden P Bowne, *Introduction to Psychological Theory*, p. 238

193 *Ibid*, p 238

194. Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 304

195 *Ibid*, p 304.

196 *Ibid.*, pp 304-305.

ject to logic.[197] Indeed the laws that govern mental contents are the laws of thought itself. And since these contents coincide with things, thought and reality, that is one of the distinguishable aspects, may be said to be identical. So far as thought and things are identical, *it only remains to seek* out in addition, the principle of movement in order to gain ultimate metaphysical insight. To Bowne, then, the principles of thought are the principles of things, and he writes:

> The laws of thought are their laws. There is no distinction; they are strictly the same. *Having thus* identified thought and reality, it only remains to find in thought some principles of the deepest mysteries of existence.[198]

Bowne believes that he has discovered this principle of movement in the dialectic of thought. It is the dialectic which is behind the movement of thought from a lesser to a greater completeness until it reaches systematic completeness.

> *If now we can persuade ourselves that thought is* the active principle of reality, then this dialectic of thought acquires objective significance, and we seem to be ready to understand existence through and through.[199]

At this point the problem of knowledge is projected into metaphysics. For we are driven by our epistemological *inquiry to the conclusion that the world of things is one* with the contents *of thought, an absolute thought.* "We have simply identified," says Bowne, "the world of things with the contens of an assumed absolute thought,"[200] admitting at the same time that he has made no provision for our knowledge of these contents. Even if we assume that there is a universal reason whose mental content consists of all things in the world, the problem remains of just how individual minds are related to the universal mind, and its

197. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 305

198. *Ibid*, p 305

199. *Ibid*, p. 305

200. *Ibid.*, p 305.

contents. Now it is Bowne's point that the relation between thought and things is not formal or deductive. "Reason as a system of principles," he says

> is only a formal outline of possibility, and contains nothing specific and actual. The actual is found, not deduced; it is a fact of experience not an implication of reason[201]

In a word, Bowne is opposed to the kind of idealism represented by the system of Hegel.

Bowne finds that within the objective order itself there are factors related to each other in ways other than the merely logical. First, there are the categories of reason acting as laws in both the inner and the outer world and so constituting a link between them. But Bowne at once points out that these categories provide only the framework of the possible, and do not contain the concrete reality as a necesary implication. Secondly, there are the general laws of the cosmos, and of these Bowne says that they "cannot be deduced from the categories of reason, though they are specifications under them.[202] For example

> The various forms of force are specifications of the general category of causality, but no consideration of the latter will yield the former. The actual existence and nature of these general laws have to be admitted as a fact without any hope of deducing them as rational necessities[203]

Finally, Bowne argues that neither the categories of reason, nor the general laws of the cosmos, in any way prefigure in the detailed facts of existence

> No reflection on the external truths of reason or the general cosmic laws would deduce a bolder or any other concrete fact These have to be admitted as opaque

201. Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 307.

202 *Ibid*, p 307

203 *Ibid*, p 307

> facts, so far as reason is concerned ; and if we will have an explanation, it can only be found in the notion of purpose. The cosmic laws could serve other ends as well as the actual, and for the actual we must have recourse to the idea of plan.[204]

It is this idea of plan, so central in the philosophy of Bowne, that makes it possible to say that even if existence is not deducible from reason, existence is still rational. For reason, Bowne argues, may be used in two different senses.

> Reason may mean the system of necessary truth involved in the nature of the intellect ; and it may be extended to cover design, purpose, fitness and character. In the latter sense, existence may be rational, or an the latter sense, existence may be rational, or an implication of the highest reason, without being such in the former sense.[205]

By means of this idea Bowne, as we shall see, builds up a metaphysics which is monistic. But his epistemology is dualistic. From the human standpoint Bowne says that the dualism of thought and thing is ineradicable. Our thought cannot be identified with things, either as their source or as their product.

TRUTH AND ERROR

"Our thought," says Bowne, "cannot become the thing, neither can the thing pass bodily into our thought.[206] How then can we ever discover whether our ideas are adequate to their objects. What positive proof is there of the validity of knowledge? All we can do, in Bowne's words, is to "think about the thing and see if we reach any result which satisfies our reason and fits into the system of experience so as to harmonize with is "[207] As will be realled, Rāmānuja says much the same. In the last analysis knowledye is self-vindicating. To Bowne accordingly

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204 Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 307-308.

205. *Ibid*. p. 308

206. Borden P. Bowne, *Personalism*, p 79

207. *Ibid*., p 80

> whatever mystery attaches to the process of knowledge and whatever verbal doubts may be raised about it, knowledge vindicates itself within its own sphere by the clearness of our apprenension and by its consistency in experience.[208]

In any investigation of knowledge, we have to assume that our faculties give us true knowledge. If this is circular, it is circularity that is unavoidable. Deny the essential truth of our faculties and allow that in their normal working they lead us astray and "there is an end of all faith in reason and knowledge."[209] Yet it is a matter of fact that "we often do go astray,"[210] so we are confronted with the problem of "how to combine the assumption of the trust-worthiness of our faculties with the recognition of actual and abundant error."[211] Now, Browne argues that "freedom ... is the only solution of the problem which does not wreck reason itself."[212] For if we invoke a theory of necessity to explain truth and error we are bound to fail. Bowne here has in mind the theory of Herbert Spencer according to which every belief and thought, whether true or false, is produced by an unknown cause and produced necessarily. Such a view provides no criterion for distinguishing between true and false. Bowne explains:

> 'Possibly we may say that there is nothing in the notion of necessity to forbid that some thoughts correspond to reality while others do not, and thus the distinction of true and false is saved. Allowing this, we are still no better off For if of these multitudinous thoughts which are necessarily produced some are true and some are false, we need to have some standard for distinguishing between them one from another. And this standard cannot consist in the necessity of the true

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208 Borden P Bowne, *Personalism*, p 80

209 Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 239

210 *Ibid*, p 239

211 *Ibid*, p 239

212 *Ibid*, p 239

thoughts and the contingency of the false ones, for all are alike necessary.[213]

In arguing that freedom provides the solution of the problem of truth and error, Bowne points out that

> the thought of a standard implies a power to control our thoughts to compare them with the standard, to reserve our decision, to think twice, to go over the ground again and again, until the transparent order of reason has been reached.[214]

Without freedom we could not control our thoughts and make the necessary comparisons and contrasts. Nothing would be left except a process in which thoughts appear and disappear. Such a process would be meaningless, a flux like any other is governed by necessity. Reason as a human capacity is dissociable from freedom. "These considerations," Bowne writes, "make it clear that the question of freedom enters intimately into the structure of reason itself.[215] It is not something that only "concerns our executive activities in the outer world;" it concerns as well "our inner rational activity."[216] If there is any escape from the overthrow of reason involved in the fact of error, it lies in the *assumption of freedom* [217]

Of course, this assumption needs to be supplemented by another, namely, that our faculties are capable of yielding us knowledge, provided they are rightly used "Our faculties," says Bowne, "are made for truth, but they may be carelessly used, or wilfully misused, and thus error is born."[218] Bowne thinks that not even formal logic is a guarantee of truth, for reality is not something deducible from the laws of thought. Indeed, formal logic suffers from

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213. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 242.
214. *Ibid.*, pp. 242-243.
215. *Ibid*, p. 243.
216. *Ibid*, 243.
217. *Ibid*, p. 243.
218 *Ibid.*, p. 243.

what Bowne calls the fallacy of the universal which "consists in mistaking class terms for things, and in identifying the processes of our clasifying thought with the processes of reality."[219] Are there then any tests of truth ? Yes, but they vary with different kinds of knowledge. On this matter Bowne observes:

> Knowledge must be defined as that which is self-evident in the nature of reason, or which is immediately given in experience, or which is cogently inferred from the given The subjective form of knowledge is certainty of the truth of its contents; but this certainty is so often the product of thoughtlessness that we have to test it by denying the alleged knowledge, and seeing if the mind can entertain the denial. If it can, then we have at best only probability. If it cannot, then we have the highest objective certainly possible.[220]

This kind of certainty attaches to ultimate principles which by their very nature must be accepted on the authority of the mind, for there is nothing else on which to found them. Hence, Bowne argues that "the most certain knowledge we have is what Hamilton has most happily termed the 'unpicturable notions of inelligence'."[221] In addition to self-evidence as a criterion of truth, there is consistency and correspondence, neither of them, of course, are absolute guarantors of truth. However, in the last analysis, faith in our knowledge rests upon a metaphysical postulation to the effect that there is a community between the thing series and the thought series. For Bowne, "knowledge can have no objective validity unless our objects themselves are cast in the moulds of thought, or unless the laws and categories of thought are also laws and categories of being"[222] Without this corrspondence, whether of identity or parallelism, "there must be a parallax between the con-

219 Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 244

220 *Idid*, p 368

221 Borden P Bowne, *The Philosophy of Herbert Spencer*, p 32

222 *Ibid*, p 296

ception and the reality and a resulting failure of knowledge."[223]

Just as no system of necessity is capable of dealing with the problem of truth, so it is incapable of dealing with the problem of error. In such a system "thoughts and beliefs become effects, and to speak of true and false thoughts seems like speaking of true and false chemical action."[224] For error to be error the self must be free. Unless freedom and rationality are united, the distinction between valid and invalid thought becomes unintelligible. Thus Bowne writes:

> The attainment of truth implies the existence of a standard of truth in the mind, and the possibility of directing our rational activity accordingly . . . .Freedom *is no less necessary to rational action than it is to moral* action. Indeed, the purest illustration we have of self-determination is in the case of thinking. We direct and maintain attention, we criticize every step, and look before and after, until we reach the rational conclusion,[225]

If the free self succumbs to error, it is because of the sway of habit, instinct or other irrational forces, in other words, because the self relinquishes its freedom. The responsibility for error rests with the finite self, and does so because the self is a free agent. Neither truth nor error have any meaning apart from this freedom.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It should be evident from our discussion of their theories of knowledge that for both Rāmānuja and Bowne, epistemology is important for our understanding of metaphysics. However, the epistemologist could hardly get started without some preconception concerning the nature

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223 Borden P. Bowne, *The Philosophy of Herbert Spencer*, p 297.

224 *Ibid*, p. 242

225 Borden P Bowne, *Introduction to Psychological Theory*, p 227.

of being in general. In the systems of both thinkers God is an immanent reality. His presence is the very guarantee of the possibility of knowledge and his constant unfolding is the basis of the dynamic character of knowledge. Rāmānuja emphasizes this point in his own way by insisting upon the determinate character of all knowledge, that is, knowledge distinguishes as it unites, and both the distinctions and the unity are expressions of the divine mind as it manifests itself in reality. Bowne rejects this idea on the ground that Thought and Thinking are entirely distinct and different.

Both philosophers agree that knowledge starts with sense experience; both agree that the mind is constitutive and its activity present at all stages of experience. If this were not so, experience would remain a meaningless flux. Concerning the ways of knowing, Rāmānuja and Bowne accept the validity of perception, inference, authority (with reservations by Rāmānuja), and intuition. With regard to the nature of intuition there is perhaps some difference between the two thinkers—if both agree that intuition is the direct appropriation of truth without the intermediation of discursive reasoning, yet—for Rāmānuja intuition is not instantaneous insight but involves a process which includes rational activity. As involving a subject-object relation, intuition is bi-polar in character and thus is always qualitative. Perhaps in the last analysis all knowledge is intuitive for Rāmānuja, for if all knowledge involves a process, its coming to fruition is not merely a logical result of such process. On the other hand, for Bowne intuition is mainly a synthetic grasp of universal truths, truths which he equates primarily with mathematics

To both philosophers judgment is the prime unit of knowledge. At every stage of mental activity involving a knowledge situation judgment is present. For every such stage involves discrimination and discrimination involves judgment. It involves also the categories of the understanding, but whereas Bowne goes into a detailed analysis

of the categories, Rāmânuja says practically nothing about them. Yet it may be said that they are implicitly present in Rāmānuja's analysis of knowledge.

The two thinkers are, however, at variance with regard to what is involved in the cognition relation. Rāmānuja holding, as far as can be made out, to a presentative theory of perception and Bowne to a representative theory. To the one the object as known is directly present to consciousness; what we know are not mental events but the objects themselves. To the other, knowledge is never a *literal embracing of the object but is mediated by a mental* event which represents or stands for the object In other words, Rāmānuja's theory may be characterized as a realistic epistemological monism, while Bowne's is an epistemological dualism, which becomes a basis for his metaphysical idealism.

Another point of difference between Rāmānuja and Bowne is the emphasis placed by the Indian thinker upon practice both as a road to knowledge and a criterion of its validity, an emphasis that is largely absent from the work of Bowne. But both thinkers are at one in emphasizing the concrete character of knowledge and both are agreed that in the last analysis the only fully concrete reality is the self. For the one as for the other the self is fundamental not only metaphysically but epistemologically. And to both, God is the Supreme Self in terms of which alone all else in intelligible and therefore knowable.

CHAPTER IV

THE METAPHYSICS OF RĀMĀNUJA & BOWNE

It is in the metaphysics of Rāmānuja, as in that of Bowne, that the core of their respective philosophies is to be found. In continuing our comparison of the two thinkers here, we shall find as before that despite considerable divergencies of approach they come to roughly similar conclusions, above all with regard to the personalistic character of reality Since the nature of being is the fundamental problem of metaphysics, we begin our comparison with a study of the two thinkers' views on this problem. But we should like first to say a few words about the category of being in general.

Being is the most inclusive of all categories. In the definition of Professor Brightman "any entity or object" comes within its scope and "whatever may be mentioned or reckoned with."[1] Being is not always equated with reality, but to Professor Brightman the two terms appear to be coterminous, for he defines reality as the "whole of actual being, including existence, values, persons, and universals It is the total object of true thought."[2] On the other hand, Dorothy Emmett, in her work on the *Nature of Metaphysical Thinking*, uses the term "being" to mean "that which exists,"[3] and so presumably excludes from it the things which Professor Brightman regards as falling within its scope.

The fact is that the definitions of being that have been proffered throughout the history of metaphysics are not

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1. Edgar S Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, Revised edition, (New York. Henry Holt and Company, 1951), p 321
2. Edgar S Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 336
3. Dorothy Emmett, *The Nature of Metaphysical Thinking*, (London Macmillan Co. Ltd, 1946), p 14

calculated to give us a clear notion of what being is. Whether it be considered as synonymous with reality, or with existence, values, persons, or universals, the result has not been helpful, since these terms are themselves vague. What we get are tautologies, or confusion of one term with another, or the reduction of several terms to a single term which itself takes on different connotations with different philosophers.

Obviously, then, if we are to arrive at any clear comprehension of the notion of being, it can only be by means of an investigation of what the notion involves. Does it involve existence? or essence? Is it prior to ideas? or can it be equated with ideas? What is existence? Is it intelligent, personal, or impersonal? What is its relation to the world of perceptual experience? The difficulty of the problem is well indicated by the French philosopher, Gabriel Marcel. He writes:

> This [the definition of being] is not a question of an ordinary predicate, perhaps even not a predicate at all . . . *to be* cannot be a property, since it is *to be* that makes possible the existence of any property at all; it is without which no property whatsoever can be conceived, though it is true that we must be careful to avoid the sort of scheme in which being exists in someway anterior to properties nothing could be more fallacious than the idea of a sort of nakedness of being which exists before qualities and properties and which is later to be clothed by them.[4]

If it is indeed the case that no predicate can be attached to being, it would appear that being is indefinable. This is the position of Professor Stace. He holds that "being cannot be defined because it is an ultimate simple notion incapable of further analysis"[5] To Professor Stace whatever is, exists, is real, has being. Hence the term being is wider than the terms *existence* and *reality* so that

4. Gabriel Marcel, *The Mystery of Being*, (Great Britain: The Harvill Press Ltd., 1951), p 20.

5. W. T Stace, *Theory of Knowledge and Existence*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), p. 294

"although all existences and realities have being, it does not follow that all being is existent or real. There may be beings which are neither."[6] Professor Stace proceeds to distinguish between being, existence and reality as follows:

> The term existence applies to all beings which are apprehended as belonging to the public independent world of things. By existence . . . I mean public independent existence. Thus a red appearing to the solitary mind and apprehended merely as a red patch has being. It certainly 'is'. But it has not attained the level of 'existence'. When, however, this same red patch is apprehended as a pillar-box, when it is believed to be visible to other minds and to exist when no one is aware of it, then it is credited with existence.[7]

On this theory being as such is indeterminate, while existence is always determinate existence, believed to be publicly observable and independent of the individual human minds. It will be observed that Profesor Stace here is not defining existence, as some philosophers have done, as that which fits into the systematic network of relations which we call public being as opposed to private being. Instead, it is reality that he characterizes in this way, reality being for him "that which is apprehended in veridical perception"[8] At the same time he is aware that such characterization is not definition, for to say that reality is that which is connected by causation, or other systematic relations, to other real things is as a definition obviously circular. Yet it suggests that realities constitute an ordered system, while unrealities such as dreams, hallucinations and delusions do not.

THE THEORY OF BEING IN RAMANUJA AND BOWNE

The foregoing general remarks on Being, cited from several representative thinkers, may serve to bring out some of the problems that arise in connection with that

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6 W T Stace, *Theory of Knowledge and Existence*, p 295
7 *Ibid*, p 295
8 *Ibid*, p 326.

concept. They are problems which appear in Rāmānuja and Bowne to whose theories of being we now address ourselves.

First of all, both thinkers stress the dynamic aspect of being by which alone, in their view, being is recognizable. Further, as a corollary of its active character being is causal, the engendering principle of all things, and is knowable precisely because of its causal activity. Real Being constitutes a system of dynamic relationships. Both philosophers are at pains to differentiate their position from that which sees being as something absolute or pure. To the one as to the other such a conception is sterile and empty

RĀMĀNUJA'S THEORY OF BEING

The Notion of Pure Being Rejected

Indeed, Rāmānuja's first step toward developing his own conception of being is through criticism of the absolutist conceptions of his predecessors. Thus he is opposed to the views of *Bhāskara* and *Śaṅkara* that pure being (unrelated being) or pure intelligence exists Such a being, he argues, is beyond the scope of knowledge, and hence meaningless. Of *Bhāskara* Professor Dasgupta writes:

> Bhāskara believed that there is Brahman as pure being and intelligence, absolutely formless, and the causal principle, and Brahman as the manifested effect, the world.[9]

If there is a contradiction in this view, it is one that *Bhāskara* refuses to recognize, for to him "all things have such a dual form as the one and the many or as unity and difference."[10] To Rāmānuja, on the other hand, unity and difference cannot both be affirmed of one and the same thing. For example, when we say 'this is like this', we are not saying that the same entity is both the subject and the predicate Suppose 'this' stands for a cow; then the predicate 'like this' stands for a particular and unique

9 S N Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, p. 192.
10 *Ibid*, p 192.

description, say of the cow's bodily appearance. "There is no meaning in asserting," says Dasgupta, speaking for Rāmānuja here, "the identity of the subject and the predicate or in asserting that it is the same entity that in one form as unity is 'subject' and in another form as difference is the 'predicate'."[11] In other words, Bhāskara holds to a theory of unity in difference which Rāmānuja rejects

Bhāskara further argues that that which conditions is not wholly different from that which is conditioned. By the same token he goes so far as to assert that being and its attributes are not different but the same.

> There are no qualities without substance (being) and no substance without qualities. All difference is also unity as well. The powers or attributes of a thing are not different from it.[12]

In opposition to this Rāmānuja takes an attributive view, so that in the case of propositions, for example, he holds that the predicate is an attribute of the subject. Writing of Rāmānuja in this connection, Dasgupta observes:

> The same attributive view is applicable to all cases of genus and species, cause and effect, and universals and individuals. The 'difference' and the 'unity' are not two independent forms of things which are both real; but the 'difference' modifies or qualifies the nature and character of the 'unity', and this is certified by all our experience.[13]

Rāmānuja is equally opposed to Śankara's view of pure being which he identifies with Brahman According to Śankara, Brahman "is the identity of pure being, intelligence and pure bliss, and is the true self of us all. Its nature is in some measure realized in dreamless sleep"[14] For, as Dasgupta writes:

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11 S N Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol II, p 193

12 *Ibid*, p 193

13 *Ibid*, p 193

14 *Ibid*, p xx

> So long as we are in our ordinary waking state, we are *identifying the self with thousands of illusory* things, with all that we call 'I' or 'mine'; but in dreamless sleep we are absolutely without any touch of these *phenomenal notions, the nature of our true state as pure* bliss is partially realized.[15]

Rāmānuja dismisses this view on the ground that there is no such thing as pure being. For him, as we have seen, being is dynamic and attributive, and it is in this dynamic character of being that he finds the activity of self-projection and self-integration, the possibility of a going out and a coming in.

Above all, for Rāmānuja being is concrete or it is nothing. It is not consciousness, as Śaṅkara thought, but rather a conscious subject. Consciousness is an attribute of the subject. What then is this conscious subject? Rāmānuja calls it Brahman. Brahman is being and he is this because of his power of activity. And this activity is thought. At this point we may pause for a moment to point out that Rāmānuja does not, like Bowne, equate being with activity, but infers being from its activity. But like Bowne he personalizes being. His argument is that if thought is characteristic of being and cannot be ascribed to something impersonal, it must be ascribed to a person He writes:

> 'Thinking' cannot possibly belong to the non-sentient Pradhāna: the term 'Being' can therefore denote only the all-knowing highest Person who is capable of thought.[16]

Now personal being has none of the absoluteness of pure being. Because being is personal it can express itself to itself, in other words, it is being-for-self. As such it involves self-analysis and *self-difference within the infinite* life. It is in this self-differentiating character of being that

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15. S. N Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p 164.

16 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, trans by Ramanujachari, p 201, and also trans by Thibaut

its dynamism resides. The point is suggested in Rāmānuja's remark that, "In Brahman, who is different from things seen in the world, powers not observed in them exist by thousands."[17] In the individual self, infinite being, being-for-self, is realized when the 'I' consciousness is in unity and fellowship with the infinite being.[18] Such realization of the self is capable of taking many forms, depending on the different ways in which being expressed itself. They may be intellectual, devotional, or loving, but whatever the forms they assume in the individual self, underlying them is the activity of being-for-self. This activity manifests itself in greater or lesser intensities of rhythmic expression. Thus the intellectual, devotional or loving mode of activity of the individual are in the last resort just the rhythmic expressions of being-for-self. To Rāmānuja these activities are really "being-for-expression", or the *Śakti* of Brahman. No activity can be considered as unimportant, for each phase of the activity of being-for-expression is the activity of being-for-self, and each phase makes its particular contribution to the different levels of understanding, devotion or love, as these occur in the individual self.[19]

The relation of the individual self to being is, therefore, of the closest. In defining this relation Rāmānuja asserts that the individual self is nothing less than the attributive activity of being-for-self. Far from being an inactive agent, the individual self is a dynamic entity, a highly charged center, so to speak, which of itself adds to the activity of being-for-expression. From the foregoing discussion it follows that for Rāmānuja, existence means relatedness and reality means activity which continues to establish greater and greater relations and thus capable of being publicly experienced.

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17. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 492
18. Mahendranath Sircar, *Comparative Studies in Vedāntism*, p. 113.
19 *Ibid.*, p 113

Brahman as Satyasya Satyam *or True of the True*

Brahman is called 'true of the true', for Brahman is the unconditioned reality. As conditioned he stands over against the *'conditioned' reality of the individual self.* Further, Brahman is the pre-existent reality as he must be if he is unconditioned. The individual selves are the creations of the pre-existent Brahman in whom all auspicious qualities are to be found. Again, Brahman is 'true of the true', because all content exists in him. His creations are not out of nothing, but are produced from his own true nature What is non-existent cannot become existent, and what exists cannot be unreal. There is still another reason why Brahman is called 'true of the true'. It is this. In meditating upon the self, the individual reaches a stage of bliss wherein he is conscious of nothing but Brahman. So Rāmānuja writes:

> The teacher tells him [the pupil] to recognize that bliss constitutes the nature of that Brahman which is the aim of all his effort ('you must desire to understand bliss') ; and bids him to realize that the bliss which constitutes Brahman's nature is supremely large and full . . . . And of this Brahman, whose nature is absolute bliss, a definition is then given as follows: 'Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, knows nothing else, that is Bhūman'.[20] This means—when the meditating devotee realizes the intuition of this Brahman, which consists of absolute bliss, he does not see anything apart from it ; since the whole aggregate of things is contained within the essence and outward manifestation of Brahman.[21]

As 'true of the true' Brahman is free from the mutations of matter and of *Karma*, or the results of acquired characteristics in earlier stages of activity. While matter takes on form and perishes in the process, Brahman alone endures. Brahman, it is true, is in space, but is not limited

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20. Bhūman is another name for Brahman in his supreme fulness of bliss.

21. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, (tr. by Tauht), pp 305-06.

by space. He is in space and yet apart from space. On this point Professor Srinivasachari writes:

> The universe of *chit* and *achit* lives, moves and has its being in Brahman, and derives its form and function from its omnipenetrativeness. Just as the self pervades the body, Brahman vivifies the universe as the life of its life. Though Brahman is in space, it is not space or spatialized, or limited to particular locality.[22]

Brahman as Knower

All things in the universe come within the orbit of Brahman's knowledge. Indeed, without Brahman, knowledge would be impossible, for there would be nothing to know He is always subject, never object. Individual existents are objects to the Supreme Self, who is Brahman. "The individual selves are in one sense objects of the supreme subject, who is perceiver of all things in the world through his supreme sustaining vision."[23]

Now with regard to the character of Brahman's knowledge Rāmānuja is concerned to refute Śaṅkara's view which would reduce it to pure qualityless thought. Such thought is a figment of the imagination. All experience is characterized by differences So if Brahman is pure consciousness, as Śaṅkara supposes, it is a fact about him that must forever remain in the realm of conjecture. For all things that enter into the realm of discourse and hence of proof are characterized by attributes. Hence, turning Śaṅkara's thesis against himself, Rāmānuja argues that 'pure' consciousness must possess attributes and is therefore not pure. "Consciousness," he says "is either proved (established) or not If it is proved, it follows that it possesses[24] attributes; if it is not, it is something absolutely nugatory, like a sky-flower, or other similar purely imaginary things."[25] To

22 P N Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Visistādvaita*, p 108

23 K C Varadachari, *Sri Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge*, p 146

24 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, (tr by Thiabaut) p 55 Note The word "possesses" here is a wrong translation It should be "is an attribute"

25 *Ibid*, p 55

Rāmānuja, then, consciousness has attributes. But he does not stop here. He points out that consciousness itself is an attribute and as such must be an attribute of something. And this 'something', if it possesses consciousness, cannot be material. It must be a spiritual being, which is to say it must be a conscious self.

Brahman as Personality

Brahman is not merely consciousness but personality as well. And as a personality Brahman is not only all-knowing but the principle of permanence without which, life, growth and movement would be impossible. None of this means that the personality of Brahman is alone real. It means rather that finite selves have a reality of their own in the sense that they are the particular embodiments of the Supreme Self or Brahman.

Above all Rāmānuja is concerned to show that the highest reality is not merely a system of externally related parts, but an all-comprehending individual person who is more than the mere sum of its parts, and logically prior to them. The supreme reality is inseparable from its parts and yet distinguishable from them. Rāmānuja's argument here is twofold: on the one hand, the individual selves are distinguishable and hence real; on the other they are comprehended within the Supreme Self, which is one with the system of being. Being, then, is that which integrates the individual selves and all else into a real unity Brahman is at once "the transcendant and immanent ground of their being what they are. He is the concrete universal, the real Absolute. He is the ultimate subject . . an infinitely intelligent personality."[26]

THE THEORY OF BEING IN BOWNE

Together with Rāmānuja Bowne rejects the notion of pure being, and like Rāmānuja further he develops his own

26. K. C. Varadachari, *The Metaphysics of Sri Rāmānuja's Sri Bhashyam*, p 56

view through a critique of earlier conceptions of being. Among the latter he is especially critical of that which would identify being with substance. To him being is not a substratum merely, which in any case is an abstraction, but consists of "thoughts, feelings, laws, relations, as well as of things."[27] Previous views of being have been largely verbal and their proponents have proceeded as if it were a word that needed to be construed rather than a notion that needed to be understood. Thus Bowne writes:

> The question which metaphysics proposes is, How shall we think of the reality or being of things? The aim is not to construe or construct existence, but simply to find out what we mean by it, or what conditions a thing must satisfy in order to fill out our notion of being.[28]

So metaphysical inquiry should proceed by way of an analysis of the notion of being; indeed it can proceed in no other way. For it is a favourite argument of Bowne that there is no avenue of approach to reality except the conceptions we form about it. Further still, the only basis on which the conceptions themselves can be evaluated is their necessity and consistency. The basis cannot be correspondence or the comparison of ideas with actual things "Validity, Bowne insists, is the only correspondence, and this can be determined only by the self-evidence or necessity with which the conception imposes itself upon the mind."[29] But, it is fair to ask, where does the conception come from? Bowne's answer is that it comes from experience, for the datum of thought is experience. And the key to reality is experience as interpreted by thought This, then, for Bowne, is real being.

Bowne's Criticism of Pure Being

If reality can only be approached through thought-interpreted experience, it is clear that absolute or pure being is an empty abstraction. It has no relation to

27. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p 13
28. *Ibid*, p. 13 Cf. *ibid*, p 3
29 *Ibid*, p 3

experience and is therefore no datum for thought But besides this epistemological objection to pure being, Bowne believes the notion leads to a logical snare, what he calls "the fallacy of the class term or the universal"[30] From a logical point of view every object, Bowne argues, is a determination of the notion of being, so that the category of being "appears alike in all, and the difference and determination are found in the attributes."[31] And we are thus driven to the conclusion that everything is an accident, which is to say that everything is a form or modification of being, "a determination of the general notion to a particular case by means of some specific mark."[32] And given this, "it is easy to imagine that there is some element of real being corresponding to the concept, which is common to all objects, and which by receiving particular determinations, becomes the particular and specific thing."[33]

It is in this way that the notion of pure being arises. It appears as the necesary pre-supposition of all definite and particular being. But the appearance is delusory, a logical abstraction without validity "Class terms," Brown writes,

> pure being among the rest, may be valid for reality, but they *never can be ontological facts* Only the definite and the specific can be real in this sense The concept, conceived as existing, is absurd[34]

In other words, *logical formulations are purely formal.* Things are not affected by them. Individuals logically brought together in a common class, still remain the same individuals. *No identity is created and no difference* abolished. Further Bowne argues, there is no passage way out of pure being:

> In concrete and complete thinking it is impossible to pass from complexity to simplicity, or from simplicity to complexity, from definiteness to indefiniteness,

30 Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p 13
31. *Ibid*, p 13
32 *Ibid*, p 14
33 *Ibid*, p 14
34 *Ibid*, p 14

or from indefiniteness to definiteness, so long as we remain on the impersonal plane.[35]

In Bowne's view, then, pure being has no objective or ontological status. In this respect it is just nothing. Even if, for the sake of argument, we granted it existence of some sort, it would still be the case that we could arrive at the notion, to make use of it, only by employing bad logic. Lacking definiteness, pure being is unintelligible, sterile and nonexistent. "Only the definite can exist; and only the definite can found the definite."[36] All efforts of philosophers to derive the definite from the indefinite, to read differences out of identity, have failed, and must fail since they are infected with the fallacy of the universal.

Being cannot be conceived unless it is conceived as something definite and specific. Bowne insists that "we have no insight into the meaning of being itself."[37] It is a simple idea and admits of no explanation. It cannot be defined by reference to anything else. It is *sui generis*. Such is the logical situation with regard to being. Is there then no mark by means of which it is possible to distinguish being from non-being? There is such a mark and Bowne explains what it is:

> After much casting about in thought, he writes, it appears that the distinctive mark of being must consist in some power of action Things, when not perceived, are still said to exist, because of the belief that, though not perceived, they are in interaction with one another, mutually determining and determined Real things are distinguished from things having conceptual existence by this power and fact of action. When this is omitted, the things vanish into presentations; and unpresented things are only the ghosts of possible presentations[38]

Bowne arrives at this conclusion by a pragmatic analysis of the function in experience of the notion of being. The incessant manifestation, he observes, of change and motion

35 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p 14
36 *Ibid*, p 14
37 *Ibid*, p 15
38 *Ibid*, p 16

in the phenomenal world, cannot be explained unless being is posited as their ontological basis. To our observation of phenomenal activity we go on to add the notion of an agent or agents. Singular or plural, it is these agents that are *the true beings, while the changes and motions are merely* phenomenal. For Bowne being must of necessity be viewed as essentially causal, for otherwise the notion of being would be inadequate to its function. We cannot rest, he says, in the thought of a groundless show. Hence, the notion of being, which is nothing else but the abiding ontological basis for the ceaseless flux of appearances. No conception of being is adequate that does not view being as containing within itself the ground and explanation of the apparent order.[39] Such for Bowne is the general character of being. We turn now to Bowne's more specific characterizations of being.

Being as Concrete—The World Ground, Thought, Activity

With regard to the concrete character of being, Bowne's argument consists of several steps and certain distinctions. First of all, the term being while it implies a possible objectivity for thought, done not necessarily imply substantiality or identity in the object. They may be ways simply in which the individual subject orders his experience, and hence restricted to the phenomenal realm. In other words, being may be used either *in the sense of an* abiding reality or in the sense of events and appearances *as these have been ordered or categorized in the process of* perception. Now Bowne will not agree that what is given in perception are only the attributes of being. In fact he rejects the time-honoured distinction between substance and attributes, and that between being and power. Instead he holds that being must "be affirmed as a causal unity, and, as such, uncompounded and indivisible"[40] The idea that attributes inhere *in being is an abstraction and therefore* unreal.

39 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p 17.
40 *Ibid*, p 22

So far Bowne has been laying the ground for his assertion that being is always concrete being. It is concrete because it is causal. Reality is always an agent. Further, it is a self-determining agent. And finally it constitutes a system. To Bowne, then, reality is the concrete, that which determines itself as a system of activity. "Being," he says, "has its existence only in its action, and the action is possible only through being."[41] It is only in terms of its activity that being is measurable, so that what is meant when we say that being is infinite is that the activity of being is unlimited.[42] As for finite things, they have being and are real to the extent that they are parts of a total system of reality and share in its activity. Accordingly, in "our finite experience we find ourselves working under a system of laws and princiles which condition us and which all our acts must obey."[43]

Bowne is prepared to say that there is one basal being in action, the origin and source of all system, of all laws, principles, and realities. This basal being is called by Bowne the world-ground. But more important than anything else about this world-ground is Bowne's assertion that it is free and intelligent. He reasons as follows:

> That the world-ground must be conceived as free and active intelligence is the result to which thought continually comes, whatever the line of investigation. If we seek a tenable theory of knowledge we find it only as we reach a basal intelligence. If we seek to find the many together in an all-embracing system, it is possible only in and through intelligence. If we seek for unity in being itself we find it only in intelligence. If we seek for causality and identity in being we find them only in intelligence. If we would give any account of the intelligible order and purpose-like products of the world, again intelligence is the only key. If, finally, we ask for the formal conditions of reality we find them in intelligence. The attempt to define reality itself fails until intelligence is introduced

41. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p. 24
42. Ibid, p. 26
43 Ibid, p. 108.

> as its constitutive condition. The mind can save its own categories from disappearing, can realize its own aim and tendencies, can truly comprehend or even mean anything, only as it relates everything to free intelligence as the source and administrator of the system.[44]

Here in the above passage Bowne's fundamental contention with regard to the nature of being is set forth in unmistakable terms. Being without intelligence is a nullity. *Infinite being is infinite thought in the form of* conception. It is all embracing and, first and last, active. It involves a thinker and a doer. Not only does the infinite thought embrace all things, but it must embrace them as what they are, that is, in their finitude, just as Bowne is concerned to emphasize the point that the infinite thought is not a resting thought, but a thinker and a doer. So he is equally at pains to show that the same thing is true of finite thought. "On the side of finite spirit, he says, we have no mere conceptions of the divine understanding, but thinkers and doers also; and in that fact they have an inalienable individuality and personality.[45]

Having said so much, Bowne returns to his thesis of the primacy of intelligence as mind. In the absence of mind experience would make no sense, yet we know that experience constitutes a realm of interrelated meanings. And such a realm, Bowne says, presupposes mental agency and rational order.

> A system of relations implies intelligence as its source and seat. When we conceive the world in its causality, we are brought down to achieve intelligence by which it exists and from which it forever proceeds. The world has its form and meaning in the divine thought, and its reality in the divine will.[46]

This re-emphasis upon intelligence thus leads Bowne to the affirmation of a theistic metaphysics. The infinite thought is divine and this divine thought is the reality behind all reality.

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44. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p iii.
45. *Ibid*, p 103.
46. *Ibid*, p. 141.

Being as Supreme Intelligence

In common with Rāmānuja, Bowne holds that unless there is a unifying intelligence, a supreme subject which itself experiences and correlates all experience, the world of things is a pure flux without ontological significance. The system of experience (and unless it were a system it would be nothing) which is common to all men is a function of an ultimate intelligence. It is this and not an extra-mental fact, Bowne writes:

> It is this system of experience, and the co-existent minds that share in it, that philosophy has to interpret. And in both the experience and the interpretation, thought remains within the intellectual sphere. Thought can neither use nor reach things lying beyond thought; and if we seem to reach such things it is only by mistaking the common to all in experience for a fact unrelated to intelligence, or by abstracting the categories from experience, in which alone they have meaning, and projecting them as extra-mental facts. As such they contradict themselves as soon as reflection begins; and the perennial antinomies of realism emerge. If, on the other hand, we refer the world of intelligible experience and intelligent spirits to intelligence, as their source, our thought system remains homogeneous with itself throughout, and we escape the chronic contradictions which haunt, in spite of all exorcisms, every realistic system of the impersonal and mechanical type. As soon as realism is seen to be, not experience, but an interpretation of experience, its untenability becomes manifest.[47]

In other words, what Bowne is saying here, is that idealism can be denied only at the expense of unempirical abstraction Realism is the typical example. It affirms the extra-mental, but the extra-mental is itself a mental construct. Not that Bowne would deny all validity to realism, for as we have seen in connection with his epistemology, he is ready enough to grant that things may exist apart from human intelligence What he is not prepared to grant, and indeed denies categorically, is that they can exist apart

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47 Borden P Bowne, *Theism*, p 142

from all intelligence. And this leads us to the view of being as knower.

Being as Unity of Knowing

We have considered being as a knower in our chapter on epistemology. In this section we shall include those *aspects that have been left out in our previous discussion* with special emphasis upon the practical aspect of knowledge. Bowne writes:

> The basal certainties in knowledge are not the ontological existence of material and mechanical things, but rather the co-existence of persons, the community of intelligence, and the system of common experience. These are not given as speculative deductions, but as unshakable practical certainties.[48]

What Bowne means by practical certainty is the predictions that can be drawn from the previous experience of individual persons and the community as a whole.

Bowne believes that the practical character of life is important because *it brings together some of those aspects* of our experience, such as feelings which consist not only of individual desires but also fundamental human interests in which life itself roots.[49] Thus for example certain beliefs and practices of persons may appear to be logically contradictory and may even appear to be unreasonable from a logical analysis. This is because "man has been considered solely as an intellect or understanding, whereas he is a great deal more."[50]

Bowne points out that to treat human life purely from a logical standpoint is to ignore such aspects of human life as will, emotion, and aspiration which form more powerful factors than logical understanding. Bowne says:

> *Man is also a practical* being, in highly complex interaction with his fellows and with the system of

48 . Borden P. Bowne, *Theism,* p 128

49 . Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge,* pp. 370-371.

50. *Ibid*, p. 376

things. Before he argues he must live; before he speculates he must come to some sort of practical understanding with himself, with his neighbours, and with the physical order. This practical life has been the great source of human belief and the constant test of its practical validity; that is, of its truth. The beliefs of a community—scientific, moral, and religious alike—have a very complex psychological and historical origin and a sort of organic growth. While reason may be implicit in them, the reflective, analytic, and self-conscious reason commonly has little to do with their production.[51]

Bowne proceeds to point out that the practical certainties of life are produced by the mind reacting to environment but moving along the lines of least resistance. As a result, what issues is a body of practical postulates and not reasoned principles. Bowne says:

> This . . . is the mind's reaction against its total experience, internal and external; it is the mental resultant of life; it is the mind's movement along lines of least resistance. The product is not a set of reasoned principles, but a body of practical postulates and customs which were born in life, which express life, and in which the fundamental interests and tendencies of the mind find their expression and recognition.[52]

Now, the practical certainties of which Bowne speaks here are the foundation stones of his metaphysics. Practice, however, begins with experience. Thus Bowne's starting point is experience and the deliverances of experience. But experience itself yields valid knowledge only to the extent that it can be subjected to the test of empirical coherence. Here, not only practice but also intelligence comes into play. Intelligence itself, he insists, cannot be understood through its own categories, that is, speculatively, for these categories themselves can only be understood through the experience of intelligence—intelligence as an active principle. The community of intelligence and the system of

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51. Borden P Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 376.

52 *Ibid*, p 376.

common experience point unmistakably to a knower who correlates all the finite centres of intelligence and impresses a common pattern upon the flux of experience, so that knowledge, whether it is practical or empirical, is unified by supreme intelligence.

The unity of experience, itself, is an empirical fact. But what is the principle of this unity? Bowne says it is consciousness. "Only in the unity of consciousness can the category of unity be realized."[53] All things change and the knowledge of them changes. That, too, is a fact of experience. And it is a fact that would seem to render knowledge impossible. Yet it is equally a fact that knowledge exists and hence implies that flux is not the last word. Somewhere there must be an element of unity and permanence. Bowne finds it in the knowing self. "The conception," he says, "of a permanent Thing with changing states is founded as conception, as well as realized in being, in fact of the conscious self. Apart from this personal reference, the categories defy all attempts to give them any metaphysical significance."[54] In this way Bowne prepares the ground for his assertion that as a knower the absolute being is an absolute person. The world of things reveals the activity of something deeper than itself, namely the absolute person.

Being as Personality

What does it mean to say that being is not only a unity of knowing, but a knowing personality? What is Personality? Bowne at once dissociates himself from the view that personality involves a form or type of corporeality. Spatial separation has nothing to do with personality, whose essence resides rather in "self-consciousness, self-knowledge and self-control."[55] Given this, it is plain that the finite self with its necessary dependence and subordination must remain, so far as personality is concerned, imperfect and

53. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised", p. 66.
54. *Ibid*, p. 66.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

incomplete. "Complete self-knowledge and self-control," Bowne writes, "are possible only to the absolute and infinite being; and this finite personality can never be more than a faint and feeble image."[56]

We shall have occasion to deal more fully with these things in our discussion of the personality of God.

SUMMARY AND COMPARISON

Both our thinkers reject the notion of pure being, and on much the same grounds. Pure being is an abstraction. Nor is this the only objection that they bring against the notion. There is another, which is far more serious. It is that we do not know pure being. Being always presents itself to us as determinate being. Indeterminate being is non-being. To Rāmānuja being is always in process of determining itself and it is these determinations that constitute its intelligibility. To the one thinker as to the other, therefore, what we know are the manifestations of being, indeed apart from these manifestations being is nothng but an empty sound.

Again, for Rāmānuja and Bowne being is concrete, and this concreteness means for them that being is a conscious subject. For a conscious subject alone is a unity and a system. In Rāmānuja this conscious subject is equated with Brahman; in Bowne it is identified as the World-Ground or God. Further, Rāmānuja speaks of being as 'real of the real' meaning thereby that being is that which endures in the midst of flux. In the same way Bowne insists upon the enduring character of personal being.

For both thinkers personal reality provides that element of permanence without which knowledge would be impossible. Further still, they agree that being is not only the guarantor of knowledge, but as knower comprehends all knowledge. All things in the world, all individual existents, come withnn the scope of the Supreme knower or subject.

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56 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised", p 118.

Finally, each thinker in his own way is concerned to emphasize that while the whole is logically prior to its parts, the parts are yet distinguishable, if not separable, from the whole. This is to say that finite personality, although it is subordinate to the Supreme personality, is not lost in it. Bowne makes the same point when he says that the categories of knowledge have no metaphysical significance apart from an all-comprehending personality at the same time that he insists that these categories are real and not mere appearances.

CAUSALITY

For Rāmānuja as for Bowne, being is possessed of attributes and these stand to one another in various relations of which the relation of interaction or reciprocity is the most important both for science and philosophy. We have seen that for both thinkers being is above all an activity and is known through its activity. Now the notion of activity is inseparable from the notion of cause. And it is to the causal relation, as this is treated in our philosophers, that we now turn. But it may be helpful first to set the problem in an historical context.

The problem has agitated the minds of philosophers throughout the ages, and has assumed a special acuteness in present day science. In Western philosophy, Aristotle was the first to deal with causality in a systematic fashion and his influence in this respect as in others has lasted down to our own time. Aristotle's fourfold (or twofold) classification is well known. According to it any production, say a statue, may be viewed in terms of its material cause, that is, the material out of which it is carved; or it may be viewed in terms of its efficient cause, that is, the energy expended in its making; or it may be viewed in terms of its formal cause, that is, the form or figure imposed upon the material; and last, it may be viewed in terms of its final cause, that is, the purpose of the statue, for example, the perpetuation of someone's memory. Taking material and efficient cause, on the one hand, and formal and final

on the other, we can see that the two important aspects of cause for Aristotle are efficiency and finality.[57]

In subsequent philosophy the prevailing idea of cause was that of power or productivity. Causes generated their effects. Not only so, but causes existed for the sake of their effects. They are purposive. With the rise of modern empirical science, however, both these views of the nature of causality come to be questioned. Final causes particularly come to be regarded as otiose. And empiricism acted as a dissolvent of Aristotle's notion of efficient causality. So Hume denies that causes are powers that necessarily give rise to their effects. All that experience tells us is that effects follow their causes, not that they are produced by them. The idea of cause is nothing but habitual conjunction of one phenomenon with another—in our experience. In fact, this is all that the idea of necessary connection amounts to, or, to put the matter in another way, deducibility exists between propositions but not between facts.

If certain kind of modern empirical philosophy reduced the idea of efficient causality to mere sequence in experience, modern science tended to dispense with final causes. On the mechanistic view, characteristic of the physics of the Nineteenth Century, causation is nothing but motion, the transformation of energy, whether such transformation minutely as in nuclear activity or massively as in the steam engine. For example, when heat expands what is involved causally is this: molecular energy in the form of heat disappears only to reappear in the shape of molar energy. Again, when coal produces steam the causal relation involved is nothing else than the transformation of molar energy into molecular energy.[58]

Until recent times the empirical philosopher, following in the footsteps of Newtonian Science, formulated his

57 Cf H Mohan Bhattacharya, *The Principles of Philosophy*, pp 198-204

58 *Ibid*, pp 200-202

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58. *Ibid.*, pp. 200-202.

RAMĀNUJA'S THEORY OF CAUSALITY

Brahman in Causal Relation to the World

In the philosophy of Rāmānuja Brahman stands in a causal relation to the world, indeed all things are ultimately referable to him What is the nature of this causal relationship between Brahman and the world ? First of all it is necessary to be clear about Ramānuja's idealism in general It does not entail the negation of the reality of matter On the contrary spirit without matter is inconceivable The world is the material body of Brahman Brahman would not be Brahman without the world The relation between spirit and matter is an organic, intrinsic relation, as indeed all genuine causal relations "There is no spirit without body, for then, spirit is ineffectual, nor a body without spirit, for then, the body is inconceivable"[62] But the intrinsic character of the relation between body and spirit does not mean that body is on the same status with the spirit To Ramānuja body is precisely that which spirit *completely controls, for its own benefit sustains and enjoys* On this subject he writes "All sentient and non-sentient beings together constitute the body of the Supreme Person for they are completely controlled and supported by him for his own ends, and are absolutely subordinate to him"[63] Again, he says that "Any substance which a sentient soul is capable of completely controlling and supporting for its own purposes, and which stands to the soul (self) in an entirely subordinate relation, is the body of that soul"[64]

In the light of this it would seem that for Rāmānuja all effective causality is confined to Brahman But the sense in which this is so is not easy to make out from Rāmānuja's own words He writes

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62 K C Varadachari *The Metaphysics of Sri Ramanuja's Sri Bhashyam*, (Madras University of Madras 1928) p 19

63 Sri Ramanuja *Sri Bhashyam* p 424

64 *Ibid* p 424

Aristotelian-wise we may think of it as the Prime Mover.[59] As spiritual, it purposively determines the world by what Bosanquet has called "pull" in contradistinction to "push", or again, in Aristotelian terms it is the final cause of things.[60] True, efficient causes reign in the empirical world, but by themselves they do not explain that world. For in the last analysis all causality is teleological. The world process is goal-directed. Such is the answer of some idealists to the empiricist reduction of cause to sequence and the mechanistic rejection of purpose.

Because it throws light on the subject generally, we should like, before turning to the study of Rāmānuja, to say something about the distinction that has been drawn between causation and causality. The term causation is taken, as by Eddington, as a name for the ordinary conception of the relation of cause and effect in which there is an assumption of temporal sequence; while the term causality is reserved for that relation in which it is not temporal sequence that is central, but the world, past, present and future, conceived as an interrelated whole. All events irrespective of their particular causes or particular effects are what they are owing to their place in a totality. It will be at once evident that on this view not time but system is of the essence of the causal principle. The causal relation is not a one-way affair but is symmetrical. In Eddington's words, in this view of things "which knows nothing of time's arrow, there is no discrimination of cause and effect; but events are connected by a *symmetrical* causal relation which is the same viewed from either end."[61] Now such a conception, espoused today by physicists, has always lain at the heart of the idealistic theory of causality, and the distinction between causation and causality is one that figures largely in the discussion that follows.

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59. H. Mohan Bhattacharya, *The Principles of Philosophy*, p. 202.

60. Ibid., pp. 202-203.

61. A. S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World*, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1928), p 295

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62 K. C. Varadachari, *The Metaphysics of Sri Rāmānujā's Sri Bhashyam*, (Madras: University of Madras, 1928), p. 19.

63 Sri Rāmānujā, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 424.

64. *Ibid*, p 424

> As Brahman has all sentient and non-sentient things for its body, and constitutes the Self of that body, there is nothing contrary to reason in Brahman being connected with two states, a causal and an effected one, the essential characteristics of which are expansion, on the one hand, and contraction, on the other, for this expansion and contraction belong (not to Brahman itself, but) to the sentient and non-sentient beings. The imperfections adhering to the body do not affect Brahman, and the good qualities belonging to the Self do not extend to the body; in the same way as childhood, youth and old age, which are attributes of embodied beings, such as Gods or men, belong to the body only, not to the embodied Self, while knowledge, pleasure, and so on, belong to the conscious self only, not to the body[65]

What Rāmānuja appears to be saying here is that while body is an effect of Brahman it does not in turn exercise any causal efficacy in relation to him On the other hand, consciousness as such is both effect and cause.

Now it may help to make this whole matter clearer if we look into what Rāmānuja has to say with regard to the relation between cause and effect According to him, effects are prefigured in their causes, present in them from the beginning The effect is only a changed state of the cause Hence the manifested world of matter and of souls, which form the body of Brahman, were initially present in him, though in subtler forms Brahman by his willing causes differentiation in matter and souls, but these two aspects of Brahman always existed And they are the two ultimate aspects of him To Rāmānuja further there is a difference between body and soul, and just as the defects and deficiencies of the body do not affect the soul, so there is a difference between Brahman, the absolute controller and his body, the individual souls, together with the world of matter, and the defects of the latter cannot affect the nature of Brahman Brahman is therefore wholly unaffected by the deficiencies of the world He remains pure and perfect in himself possessed of endlessly beneficent qualities The

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65 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 422

only thing that can stand in the relation of cause to Brahman is Brahman himself.

Brahman and the World

The relation between Brahman and the world is eternal One term in this relation cannot be stressed without stressing the other "Brahman is the cause and condition of the effect, namely, the universe (jagat), for being what it is"[66] We have already seen that for Rāmānuja the universe in its potential, or what he calls, subtle form exists in Brahman eternally It is an act of Brahman's will that the universe becomes manifest "Without his volition (iççha) nothing can take place"[67] The effectuation of the various things and forms of the world is, then, owing to the "will to manifest on the part of Brahman"[68] What is thus the effect is the cause made manifest, not however without real differences in the effect such, for example, as its pluralization But this differentiation of the effect into a diversity of forms and names is still dependent upon the cause and sustained by it. It develops out of the cause, a gradual unfoldment, a process in time In the cause, past, present and future are all contained It is the condition of every possibility[69] Much in the manner of Bowne for whom to be is to act, Rāmānuja argues that causes as well as their effects are dynamic in their very nature, their being is their manifestation Thus the physical manifestation of things in the world is due to the activity of matter, while matter, as one of the aspects of Brahman, begins to act at the will of Brahman Inhering in the activity of matter is the spirit of Brahman, which places matter in motion

Brahman's creation of the world is not without purpose It is the very nature of Brahman to will the good of the

66 K C Varadachari, *The Metaphysics of Sri Ramānuja's Sri Bhashyam*, p 20
67 *Ibid*, p 20
68 *Ibid*, p 21
69 *Ibid*, p 21

individual selves, selves which are organically related to him. By Brahman's design these selves grow and develop, thereby not only enriching their own experiences but the experience of Brahman himself. Indeed the motive behind creation and evolution is to elevate individual souls to a position of independence, not of course of Brahman, but of all lower impulses. Rāmānuja writes:

> In the past, this *Prajāpati*—the Bhagavān (Brahman) intently reflected at the time of creation, on the entities (chit), entangled in matter (achit) from an immemorial past. They were destitute of a name, of a form, and of a distinction, and embosomed in Him. They were fit for fulfilling great aims, but were lying latent like inert or unintelligent substances. *Prajāpati* out of infinite mercy looked on them, and wishing to work out their deliverance, created them.[70]

Thus the purpose of Brahman's action is, if we may use a modern phrase, soul-making.

Causality, Casual Unity and the Personality of Brahman

Rāmānuja is especially concerned to point out that at the impersonal level purposive causal activity can have no meaning. Purpose is intelligible only with reference to a purposer. Thus sentient being is a progressive adaptation to the living intelligence of Brahman, which indeed sustains and directs all being. At the level of personality the characteristic thing is inner growth, which again is the unfolding of the infinite consciousness that is present in all selves. In this way causality, as conceived by Rāmānuja, involves continuity, immanent unity and freedom.[71] It involves continuity since Brahman's creation involves every gradation of being; immanent unity since the one Brahman is present in all things; and freedom since all true being is self-determined.

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70. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Rāmānuja's Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita*, p. 99. Cf. Sri Rāmānujā, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 332.

71. P. N. Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Visistādvaita*, p. 260.

In summing up Rāmānuja' theory of causality we may say that causality is at work in the modifications that matter undergoes, modifications that are not the result of blind necessity, but of the will of Brahman. Secondly, causality refers to the freedom characteristic of the self as it strives to re-enact past states of perfection. Finally, and above all, causality refers to the spiritual personality of Brahman, which comprehends all other personalities, that is to say, both selves and bodies, *governing and controlling* them as a system of nature and a system of selves. In Rāmānuja thus causality provides the explanation of the nature of Brahman as the world-ground and goal of all that exists.[72] Rāmānuja himself writes:

> Brahman in all its states has the souls and matter for its body; when the souls and matter are in their subtle state Brahman is in its causal condition; when, on the other hand, Brahman has for its body souls and matter in their gross state, it is, 'effected' and then called world. . . .[73]

Again, in a highly difficult passage he writes:

> There is no confusion of the different characteristic qualities: for liability to change belongs to non-sentient matter, liability to pain to sentient souls, and the possession of all excellent qualities to Brahman . . . the souls joined to non sentient matter persist in a subtle condition and thus constitute Brahman's body must necessarily be admitted; for that the souls at that time also persist in a subtle form. . . . Non-division, at that time, is possible in so far as there is no distinction of names and forms. It follows from all this that Brahman's causality is not contrary to reason.[74]

BOWNE'S THEORY OF CAUSALITY

The Meaning of Cause

Bowne draws a distinction between causality in the inductive sense and causality as metaphysical efficiency.[75]

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72. P. N. Srinivasachariar, *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaitā*, p 261.
73. Sri Rāmānuja *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 469. (Tr. by Thibaut).
74. *Ibid.*, p. 470.
75. Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed.", p. 68.

By inductive causality Bowne means the order in which events occur. And here he distinguishes further between cause and adequate cause. He explains:

> Any event with complex antecedents would have only one adequate cause, but it might be said to have as many causes as antecedents, for any one of these might, on occasion, complete the group, and thus be viewed as the cause. This is causality in the inductive sense.[76]

Now Bowne is of the opinion that no study, however intensive, of the antecedents of events can result in a satisfactory explanation of an effect or event. For such a study still leaves unexplained the agency that brings about the empirical conditions under which events occur.[54] Bowne calls this agency productive efficiency of dynamic determination. What he is in search of, in a word, is metaphysical causality.[78]

Events, he argues, must have a causal ground. Nor is this all. This causal ground, he believes, may take on a "volitional form";[79] indeed we shall find him arguing that volition is the ultimate pattern of all causality. To "popular thought causation manifests itself in three great forms, the interaction of things, the determination of consequents by their antecedents, and in volitional self-determination."[80] In common sense experience, it is noticed that while things continue to exist in independence of one another, yet they are also involved in an order of mutual change and concomitant variation. It is a natural conclusion, therefore, that the place and function of each individual is determined by its relation to the whole. But the question at once arises, how can things which are independent of one another be brought together in any systematic connection? Bowne's answer is interaction.

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76 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed" p. 69
77. *Ibid*, p 70.
78 *Ibid*, p 70
79. *Ibid*, p 70
80 *Ibid*, p. 70

Interaction

The problem of interaction involves us in a consideration of the logical presupposition underlying a system, the given facts of experience or the empirical matrix of a system, and finally the nature of interaction itself. Bowne's first point is that logical relations are establshed by thought in terms of likeness and difference, of mutual exclusion and inclusion *into a logical whole*[81] *Any system*, if it is to be discoverable at all, must be a system of law, and if it is to be known it must be amenable to thought and the laws of thought[82] It must be a system of law, which means "that definite antecedents shall have the same definite consequents, and this in turn demands an exact adjustment or correspondence of all the interacting members to all the rest . . ."[83] And Bowne adds that "the whole of law upon which Science builds is but the expression of this metaphysical adjustment or correspondence"[84]

How this correspondence comes about or is secured remains an unsolved problem, but Bowne is convinced of the fact itself And he is so convinced because such corresdence *is a postulate of all objective science* According to the scientific theory of cause, similar causes must have similar effects, fixed quantitative and qualitative relations must hold between one and the other If this state of affairs actually prevails, it presupposes that everything must be adjusted to every other thing in an exact and all-embracing harmony But while such a presupposition is undoubtedly right in making it, yet that theory leaves causality unexplained To Bowne, "this general commensurability and adjustedness of things, while a pre-condition of system, founds none It determines the possibility of combination *rather than its actuality*"[85]

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81 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, 'revised ed", p 71.
82 *Ibid*, p 71
83 *Ibid*, p 71
84 *Ibid*, p 72
85 *Ibid*, p 72

What, then, is missing in the scientific account of causality ? It is the activity of the intellect. In Bowne's view there is a conceptual system of causality. That system is characterized by two things ,one as essential as the other. They are "first, the commensurability of the conceptions themselves ; and secondly, the unity of the thinking mind."[86]

The mind must "comprise" the variety of conceptions in the unity of one consciousness, and further it must distinguish, compare, and relate them, and so order them into one systematic whole. In shor,t the unity of the thinker is the supreme condition of the existence of any conceptual order. Now Bowne is not prepared at this point simply to interchange this conceptual system with the real system of causality. In the latter things do not exist merely in our minds, or in any mind. They do not form a conceptual system, but a real system apart from all mind. Thus we are confronted with the problem of what it is in the real system that fulfills the function the unitary thinker fulfills in the conceptual system. By virtue of what agency or principle is the concrete system a system at all ? Bowne believes that in the last analysis only one answer is possible. It is that the real system is founded by a supreme thinker.

To common sense this view is far-fetched and unacceptable, and the alternative it offers is that systematic relations are to be accounted for by the fact of interaction.[87] The mutual changes of things demand a causal explanation ; and spontaneous thought finds it in their interaction. Viewed as interaction, what, we may ask, is the form and location of causality. Is there a causal ground for the phenomenal changes in things ? First, with regard to interaction Bowne would point out to the common sense philosopher that it cannot take place between things as independent agents. It is rather something that takes place between things as dependent on one fundamental reality.

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86. Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p. 72.
87 *Ibid.*, p 73

Further, he argues that we have no experience of interaction as such. It is easy to suppose that in the case of volition we have such an experience. But the experience here, Bowne answers, is in reality not one of interaction. Certain physical changes occur consequent upon an act of will, but the fact is we know nothing about the nature of the connection. All that we know is antecedence and sequence. How then can things that are mutually independent interact? It will not do to say that the "thing transfers its condition to the thing acted upon, and this transference is the act."[88] For the notion of transference here itself needs explaining. Moreover, it is an excessively sense-bound conception, and it is up against the fact that conditions and attributes are nothing apart from a subject. Accordingly, there would seem to be no such thing as transference. Bowne concludes that whether we take the view that forces play between things or that effects are only passing influences, we have to admit that there is really no way of proving beyond doubt that things interact. The traditional notions of interaction would appear to be untenable.

The trouble lies in the notion of interaction between mutually independent things. As Bowne points out, in an interacting system, each member has to adjust itself to every other, because every other member does what it does.

"The causality of each is relative to the causality of all. The formula for the activity of any one must be given in terms of the activities of all the rest."[89] The implication is plain: "The being of each is relative to the being of all, for the being itself is implicated in the activty."[90] There is no lump or core of being in a thing to which the activities are externally attached. Things are what they are because other things are what they are. Thus interaction must be declared impossible so long as things are viewed as independent. Bowne writes:

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88. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed.", p. 74-75.
89. *Ibid*, p 79.
90 *Ibid*, p. 80.

> By definition, the independent must contain the ground of all its determinations within itself, and by analysis that which is subject to the necessity of interaction must have the ground of its determinations in others as well as in itself. The two conceptions will not combine. Every attempt to bridge the chasm between independent things by some passage of forces, influences, etc. results in a purely verbal explanation, which it is impossible to think through.[91]

The theories so far examined throw no light on interaction. Yet interaction itself must be affirmed. And it is clear to Bowne that the only way in which it can be affirmed

> is to deny the independence of the plurality, and reduce it to a constant dependence, in some way, upon one all-embracing being, which is the unity of the many, and in whose unity an interacting plurality first becomes possible.[92]

In a word, an interacting many cannot exist without a coordinating one.

We are about to see that the clue to this coordinating one is personality.

Personality as the Basis of Interaction

It should be plain by now that all attempts to fill the gap between two independent things by means of influences or forces are bound to end in failure. "The simple analysis," Bowne writes, "of the notions of interaction and independence shows them to be incompatible."[93] One or the other must be given up, "and, as the notion of interaction is essential to the notion of a system, we give up the independence of the interacting members."[94] This done, it becomes clear that the interaction of different elements is only possible through the "unity of an all-embracing one, which either coordinates and mediates their interaction, or of which they are in some sense phases of modifications."[95]

91. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "1st ed", p 125-126.
92. *Ibid*, p. 126.
93. *Ibid*, p. 126
94. *Ibid.*, p 126
95. *Ibid.*, "revised", p 81

But is it so clear? Bowne himself is aware that if we deny the independence of the interacting members, it is still possible to ask what need there is for going outside them for something else on which they depend. Bowne's reply to this objection that dependent things themselves can constitute an independent system is that you cannot make an independent out of a sum of dependents.

> Some one thing, he says, must be independent, and all the rest must be, in some sense, functions of that one. As interacting, a state of each must imply a certain state of all; and this is impossible, so long as there is not some being common to all.[96]

Now the paradigm for the kind of unity Bowne is in search of is the mind as embracing all its thoughts, feelings and other mental states, in the unity of its existence

> In this way only is it possible to remove, not the mystery of interaction, but the contradiction of the notion. The infinite may freely posit the finite, and may, with equal freedom, posit an interaction between itself and the finite, but all interaction between mutually independent beings is impossible in thought; and hence unaffirmable in fact, except through some ultimate being who embraces them all in the unity of itself.[97]

Thus the ultimate pluralism of spontaneous thought must be exchanged for a basal monism. Nor is this all. The unity thus reached is emphatically not the unity of a logical universal, nor of any ideal classification whatever, but the essential substantial unity of a being which alone is self-existent, and in which all things have their being.[98]

To Bowne this unity is the infinite self or the world-ground, and it is intelligent. For "the order of nature is utterly opaque without conceiving this being as intelligent."[99] No other conception is possible on Bowne's leading postulate, namely, that the world is accessible to thought and therefore intelligible. Further, the only real unity we

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96. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "1st ed.", p. 127.
97. Borden P. Bowne, *Studies in Theism*, p. 256.
98. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "1st ed.", p. 130.
99. Borden P. Bowne, *Studies in Theology*, p. 258.

have any knowledge of is the free and conscious self. All other unities are formal, and have only a mental existence. Active intelligence, then, supplies the unity which, if it does not lessen the mystery of interaction, frees it of contradiction. And, as we have already seen, this active intelligence cannot be understood through the metaphysical categories, but these categories rather are to be understood as realized in active intelligence.[100]

Thus the unity that is alone capable of explaining system is characterized by activity, intelligence and personality. An impersonal unity can yield nothing but flux. Ultimately all causality is volitional causality. "Volitional causality, that is, intelligence itself in act, is the only conception of metaphysical causality in which we can rest."[101] Such a conception apart from all else, has for Bowne the immense advantage that it enables us to escape "the abyss of infinite regress." It has the advantage in viewing causality further that as free and intelligent, it leaves the door open for an explanation of the problem of error.

To Rāmānuja and Bowne causality can only be explained by the immanent action of one fundamental reality. The Indian thinker would certainly have agreed with Bowne when he wrote:

> This being, as fundamental and independent, we call the infinite, the absolute, the world-ground. In calling it the infinite, we do not mean that it excludes the co-existence of the finite, but only that it is the self-sufficient source of the finite. In calling it the absolute, we do not exclude it from all relation, but deny only external restriction and determination. In calling it the world-ground, we do not think of a spatial support, and still less of a raw material out of which things are made, but rather of that basal causality by which the world is produced and maintained. Everything else has its cause and reason in this being. Whatever is true, or rational, or real in the world must be traced to this being as its source and determining origin[102]

100. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p 91.
101. *Ibid*, p. 92.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 93

SUMMARY AND COMPARISON

For Rāmānuja as for Bowne, the world has a first cause, which is God, but whereas for the one thinker this cause operates upon a previously existent, if highly subtle, matter, for the other it operates by fiat, so to speak. But Rāmānuja no less than Bowne insists that the world's coming into being marks on alteration in God Himself. God does not change, though He is the initiator in the last analysis of all change. Both thinkers agree that causality is never merely mechanical, but purposive. The clue to the nature of causality is to be found in the self and its activities. If this idea is less explicit in Rāmānuja than in Bowne, it is yet indubitably an important item in the Indian philosopher's thought. To the one thinker as to the other the highest expression of causality is the absolute self which is the world-ground and the goal of all that exists This Supreme Self is at once both immanent and transcendent,[103] and all comprehensive. It is free and has endowed the finite selves with freedom. And they like their creator, are the real exemplars of causality.

THE PROBLEM OF CHANGE AND IDENTITY

Experience is notoriously a flux, yet without some element of identity experience itself would be impossible. Change and permanence go hand in hand. As Bowne says:

> We think of a thing as active, but still more as *abiding*. It has changing states, but nevertheless it is always equal to and identical with itself. The laws of thought themselves seem to demand this, for a thing is nothing for us except as it comes under a fixed idea.[104]

Although there is nothing new about this statement, still it poses the problem of how a thing can change and at the same time remain the same (identical) Being cannot be all change, for without some underlying unity talk of existence, knowledge, law or pattern, even change itself

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103. For Bowne, God is not transcendent of the physical world, but only of persons.

104. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p. 44.

becomes meaningless. Professor Bertocci grasps the core of the matter when he writes:

> For change as change, change as nothing but change (as opposed to change in some unchanging direction) is simply unintelligible. There must be something in the universe which is *contemporaneous* sustainer of the changes that are. No being who is himself in absolute flux (nay, in any flux, these thinkers insisted) can serve the purpose of explaining change, for then he himself requires a permanent source.[105]

It may serve to delineate our problem more sharply if we distinguish, as Bowne does, between various types of change and identity. Bowne, in common with other thinkers, speaks of three kinds of identity, namely, logical, phenomenal and metaphysical.[106] Logical identity is simply sameness of definition. Phenomenal identity is either the equivalence of appearance or the continuity of equivalent appearance. On the other hand, metaphysical identity "applies to the reality behind the appearance."[107] Of these three sorts of identity it is metaphysical which offers the most difficulty. And it is not easy to say either what precisely is meant by change. In the abstract change may imply any kind of sequence, whether it be lawless or chaotic, continuous or discontinuous. In this sense, change would be simply a departure from the present order in any direction whatever.[108]

In science and philosophy change is commonly considered to be sequence according to law. It is assumed that there is a causal continuity between the successive states of reality whereby each is founded in its predecessor, and, in turn, founds its successor. Excluded is the positivistic notion of antecedence and sequence as the only relation between past and future. Such a notion would reduce everything to an absolute and groundless becoming, so that

105. Peter A. Bertocci, *Introduction to Philosophy of Religion*, p. 280.

106. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revied ed", p. 45.
107. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
108. *Ibid*, p. 46.

the present would not be founded in the past and would not found the future All continuity would be dissolved Every phenomenon would be a groundless and opaque fact Not even Heraclitus, the great upholder of change, went as far as this For him all is flux, but flux according to law

It has been argued that change cannot be real since it is contradictory Bowne undertakes to refute this contention Take the body A which ceases to be A in becoming A1 The

> ceasing of A and the becoming of A1, Bowne writes, are the same fact seen from opposite sides Seen from behind, it is the ceasing of A, seen from before, it is the becoming of A1 Now it is only in this sense that change implies that A is both A and A1 at the same time There is no indivisible instant in which A rests at both A and A1, but one in which A ceases to be A and becomes A1, precisely as a moving body never moves with two velocities in the same direction at the same moment But the fact that the one indivisible flow divides itself for our thought into two factors—a ceasing and a becoming involves no more contradiction than the fact that the same curve is both concave, and convex when seen from opposite sides [109]

On this view, there is no real contradiction between change and identity They are like the opposite sides of a single medal On the other hand, throughout the history of philosophy, from Parmenides to F H Bradley, the view keeps recurring that change is contradictory and therefore unreal Being is self-identical In modern times, philosophers, especially Hegel and the Hegelians, have taken the bull by the horns and asserted that change is contradictory but not on that account unreal Reality is a dialectical process, embracing every variety of contradiction and yet remaining one with itself We shall see in what follows that the views of Rāmānuja and Bowne, though they differ in many respects from that of Hegel and Hegelians, yet agree with the latter that reality is one and also changes

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109 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p 50

Change and Identity in Rāmānuja

The kind of identity with which Rāmânuja is concerned is concrete identity. He places great emphasis upon the identity of being and the logic of identity. But his is not a Hegelian logic in which thought is under the necessity of bringing being and non-being together if it is to issue in a definite concept. To Rāmānuja being requires no reference to non being, so that his concrete identity is not a dialectical unity of opposites. A thing 'is' and it cannot be said of it at the same time that it 'is not'. Difference implies opposites, but identity is such precisely because of the absence of opposites. Yet if identity does not hold within it the opposites of being and non-being, it is not bare unchanging identity. It is at this point that Rāmānuja introduces the theory of attributes. The theory is designed to preserve the identity of being, while emphasizing its changing states. And as emphasizing change, it emphasizes at the same time the dynamic character of being.[110]

It is in the dynamic character of being that Rāmānuja finds the possibility of process, self-unfoldment, self-projection and self-integration. Within the total synthesis, which is being, there goes on an endless process of synthesizing.[111] Thought discovers that it is never in contact with being as such, but with the attributes of being. It is thus obliged to posit attributes which together with the concrete being of substance, constitute the synthesis that satisfies the demands of thought. The concrete picture of being which emerges from the activity of thought is one that mediates between the two abstractions of substance without attributes or attributes without substance, one being as unintelligible as the other.[112] Unfortunately Rāmānuja provides us with no very clear idea of the relation between being and attributes. It would seem that the

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110. Mahendranath Sircar, *Comparative Studies in Vedantism*, p. 26.

111. *Ibid*, p 26

112. *Ibid*, p. 26.

attributes are not merely relative to thought (though there is a suggestion of this doctrine) but are inherent in the very nature of being.[113]

Change Due to Being (Puruṣa) in Proximity to Matter (Prakṛti)

As we have already noted, the world is inaugurated by an act of Brahman's will. It is the absolute self of *Purusa* that initiates movement in the material body of Brahman; from which it follows that the locus of change is not in *Puruṣa* but in *Prakṛti* or matter which exists as the body of the Supreme Self. But before it is thus excited to movement matter exists in a subtle state, or as a potentiality, if one will, in the Self, so that for all practical purposes, it is really one with the Absolute Self. Rāmānuja writes:

> Now, when this world which forms Brahman's body has been gradually reabsorbed into Brahman, each constituent element being refunded into its immediate cause, so that in the end there remains only the highly subtle, elementary matter which Scripture calls Darkness; and when this so-called Darkness itself, by assuming a form so extremely subtle that it hardly deserves to be called something separate from Brahman, of which it constitutes the body, has become one with Brahman; then Brahman invested with this ultra-subtle body forms the resolve, May I again possess a world-body constituted by all sentient and non-sentient beings, distinguished by names and forms just as in the previous aeon', and modifies (*pariṇāmayati*) itself by gradually evolving the world-body in the inverse order in which reabsorption has taken place.[114]

It may be remarked by the way here that in this statement Rāmānuja recognizes space and time, for in admitting the existence of matter, he admits the existence of space, and the mention of 'aeon' implies a time series. We shall return to this subject in our section on space and time

113. Mahendranath Sircar *Comparative Studies in Vedantism*, p 27.

114. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, (Tr. by Thibout) p 403

which are better dealt with separately, though they have a bearing obviously on the problem of change and identity.

The Unchanging Character of the Absolute Self

Rāmānuja is well aware that unless there is something permanent there can be no change, or at any rate no knowledge of change. If everything were mere flux there would be no way of knowing the fact. To Rāmānuja change is intelligible only in terms of the Absolute Self, which is permanent and unchangeable. The change which the world undergoes in the course of its evolution are changes not in Brahman but in the body of Brahman as it passes from a subtle to a gros state. Brahman's essential nature remains unchanged.[115] Matter alone changes. At the same time Rāmānuja insists that changes in matter are owing to the immanent presence of Brahman himself.

Of course, we are at once faced with the question, why change at all? Why the existence of the manifold? It is an old question—one that no theory of creation can escape. In the first place, the very idea of a perfect being who launches out upon a line of activity in order to fulfill a purpose is one that appears to be a contradiction in terms; for it implies a lack or imperfection in the being who by definition is perfect. How can creation add anything to the Absolute Self? In the second place, if it is argued that the individual souls are created in order to add to the sum total of goodness in the world, there is a ready answer. Given the suffering in the world, it is not at all evident that creation has added to its goodness. Rāmānuja, of course, is not unaware of these difficulties. Creation, he says, is the 'sport' of Brahman.

> The motive which prompts Brahman . . . to the creation of a world comprising all kinds of sentient and non-sentient beings dependent on *his* volition is nothing else but sport, play We see in ordinary life how some great king, ruling this earth with its seven

115 Bharatan Kumarappa, *The Hindu Conception of the Deity*, p. 229.

> *dvīpas*, and possessing perfect strength, valour, and so on, has a game at balls, or the like, from no other motive than to amuse himself; hence there is no objection to the view that sport only is the motive prompting Brahman to the creation, sustentation, and destruction of this world which is easily fashioned by his mere will.[116]

Now this view is not as heartless as it sounds. The term 'sport', as Rāmānuja uses it, is not to be understood as childish play, but rather in the sense of joyous and free activity on the part of the Supreme Self, as the spontaneous expression of his manifold powers.

Be this as it may, the question still remains, what precisely is the relation between the Absolute Self, who is pure unchanging spirit, and the world of matter, sentient and non-sentient which is the locus of all change? Perhaps Rāmānuja's treatment of the mind-body relation, which we reserve for a later section, will help to throw some light on this matter. For the present we rest with Rāmānuja's contention that the ground of change is in matter as existing in a space-time continuum; that change is initiated by the will of Brahman; and that it continues indefinitely until Brahman withdraws from the world at the end of a certain 'aeon'. In all this, permanence is guaranteed by the unchanging character of the Absolute Self, which is immanently present in all things, knows and controls them.

BOWNE'S THEORY OF CHANGE AND IDENTITY

If we look at the world of things by itself, and try to explain change and identity, we should be baffled, for the phenomenal world shows nothing but unceasing flux. To Bowne "spontaneous thought is very possibly right in demanding permanence and identity",[117] but in confining itself to the analysis of sense experience in the search for the enduring and abiding in the midst of change, such thought can only conclude that all is change. The

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116. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, - 477. (Tr. by Thibaut)
117. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed.", p. 59.

Heraclitean flux is inescapable if we stay within the framework of an extramental or external world. Even change itself is unintelligible apart from reference to an abiding intelligence. Thus Bowne observes that "while spontaneous thought cannot find its identities in an extra-mental world, just as little can the doctrine of change be made intelligible without reference to an abiding intelligence."[118]

Attempts to Reconcile Change and Identity

By way of developing his own view, Bowne takes up for criticism three theories of the relation of change and identity. First, there is what he calls the popular view which consists in the notion of a changeless thing with changing states or changing qualities. In this conception, Bowne says, we have a division of labour similar to that in the popular conception of being. He writes:

> There we had a rigid core of duration, which simply supplied the being. In addition to this there was a certain set of forces, in somewhat obscure relations to the being, which furnished the activity. Here we have the same core of duration, which provides for the identity, and a swarm of conditions, states and qualities, which look after the change. The identity is located in the core of being, and the change is attributed to the state sand qualities.[119]

The superficiality of this view is obvious and Bowne places his finger on its weakness when he points out that the state of a thing is not something externally attached to the thing. It is rather intrinsic to the thing, expressing what the thing is at the moment.

> Any other conception throws us back into the external conception of inherence . . . and makes the thing useless as an explanation of its states. For, if the thing itself does not change in the changes of its states, there is no reason why the states should change, or why their changes should follow one direction rather than another [120]

118. Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed.", p 59.
119 *Ibid*, pp 50-51.
120 *Ibid*, p 51

This is to say that the thing itself must found and determine its changes, or we face the question: what is changing? In other words, the thing itself must undergo an essential change; "for if A remains A, instead of becoming A1, there is no ground why any of the manifestations of A should change."[121] And Bowne goes on to say,

> The external change must be viewed as the external *manifestation* of an internal cange. A change be tween things must depend upon a change in things. Now *when we remember that the only reason for positing* things is to provide some ground for activity and change, it is plain that the changeless core is of no use, and must be dropped as both useless and unprovable . . . *if being is to explain change, change must* be put into being, and being must be brought into the circle of change.[122]

No more successful than this attempt to explain change and identity is that which Bowne ascribes to the physicist. The difference between the two is more verbal than real. The physical view assumes that things in themselves are Changeless, but that their relations change. We have the changing appearances, on the one hand, and the underlying realities, unaffected by them, on the other. *On this view the phenomenal world is appearance and beneath it is "a mass of changeles and invisible atoms".*[123] Here again, as in the popular conception, the thing in need of explanation is left unexplained. Why do relations change? No reason is given why a relation A should pass into a new relation B. *If one passes into the other it can only be owing to* a change in the activity of some or all of the elements, and this implies a change in the things themselves. If this were *not so, if the relation is independent of things, then the* latter cannot be invoked to explain the relation [124]

In passing it may be remarked that the view here ascribed by Bowne to the physicists is one that contemporary

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121. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed", p 51-52.
122. *Ibid*, p 52
123. *Ibid.*, p. 52
124. *Ibid*, p 52

physics would certainly disavow. But his criticism of the Newtonian view is none-the-less valid.

There is still another view that Bowne attacks, namely that of Herbart, the German philosopher. It is the notion of "accidental view" that is the object of his criticism. According to this notion, the changes in things are in their appearances, and changes in appearance are due to the changing position of the observer. As Bowne explains it, the same line, for example, "might be a ride, a chord, a tangent, a sine, a cosine, or a diameter, according to its relation to other lines, and yet it would be the same line in all these relations. The relations would be accidental. According to the position of the observer, therefore, the same thing may appear in widely different relations, yet without any change in itself."[125] The trouble here is that the problem of change is removed from the outer world to the inner. But this shift gets us nowhere. For since the knowing also belongs to the realm of being, "and is indeed, the only being of which we have immediate experience, the difficulty remains the same".[126] It may be that the physical world is only a succession of phenomena in our minds, yet it is a succession that must be caused by something and perceived by something. Consequently change, eliminated from the phenomena, must be found in the producing agent or in the percipient mind. It is impossible, even on a view like Herbart's, to eliminate change from being, or reserve an unchanging core in being unperturbed by the cycle of change.

It is thus evident to Bowne that neither the popular, physical, nor Herbartian solutions of the problem of change and identity is acceptable. And he proceeds to offer his own solution Both change and identity taken separately are but mere abstractions of the intellect, instances of the fallacy of the universal So long as we remain on this level of abstraction no solution of the problem is possible. What

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125. Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed", pp 52-53.
126 *Ibid*, p 53.

is wanted, if we are to make any headway with the problem, is a concrete principle Flux is everywhere, and escape from it is possible only if there is something abiding Now it is Bowne's thesis that this something is revealed in experience[127] More specifically, it is revealed in the knowledge of our selves It is here in the consciousness of self as *identical throughout change that the clue to the solution* of the problem of change and identity is to be found For *here and here alone* do we have the prime exemplar of identity in change Bowne writes

> The conception of a permanent thing with changing states is founded as conception, as well as realized in being, in the fact of the conscious self Apart from this personal reference, the categories defy all attempts to give them any metaphysical significance The formal identities of logic are intelligible on their own plane, but the *metaphysical* identities of things are simply shadows of self-identifying intelligence Instead, then, of interpreting personality from the side of ontology, we must rather interpret ontology from the side of personality Only personality is able to give concrete meaning to those ontological categories by which we seek to interpret being Only personality is able to *reconcile the Eleatic and Heraclitic philosophies*, for only the personal can combine change and identity, or flow and permanence[128]

The Permanence of the Absolute Self

In Bowne's view, the impersonal abides in perpetual process, "a flowing form of activity, to which, because of its constancy, we attribute thinghood, but which is in reality, only a form of the activity of something deeper than itself"[129] And cleaving to this view of the primacy of the self, Bowne concludes "that the absolute person, not the absolute being, is the basal fact of existence"[130] As abstract principles, change and identity are in mutual contradiction, and they necessarily remain so unless they

127 Borden P Bowne *Metaphysics*, revised ed ', p 66
128 *Ibid* p 66
129 *Ibid* p 66
130 *Ibid* p 66

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125. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed", pp. 52-53.
126 *Ibid.*, p. 53.

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127 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed ', p 66
128 *Ibid* p 66
129 *Ibid* p 66
130 *Ibid*, p 66

are lifted to the plane of self-conscious thought where they are interpreted not as abstractions but as concrete manifestations of the living intelligence which is at once the source of both change and identity, and the principle of their reconciliation.

> The soul knows itself to be the same, and distinguishes itself from its states as their permanent subject. This permanence, however, does not consist in any rigid sameness of being but in memory and self-consciousness, whereby alone we constitute ourselves abiding persons. How this is possible there is no telling; but we get no insight into its possibility by affirming a rigid duration of some substance in the soul. The soul, as substance, for ever changes; and unlike what we assume of the physical elements, its series of changes can be reversed only to a slight extent. The soul develops, but it never undevelops into its former states. Each new experience leaves the soul other than it was; but, as it advances from stage to stage, it is able to gather up its past and carry it with it, so that, at any point, it possesses all that it has been. It is this fact only which constitutes the permanence and identity of self.[131]

The Ultimate Cause of Change

God as the creator of the world is also the begetter of all the changes in it. There is a logic in the system of things which absolutely determines all co-existences and sequences; so that the phenomenal order appears to be self-sufficient. Nevertheless, the fact is that this system is "only the outcome of the consistent activity of the all-embracing God".[132] It is the volition of the absolute personality that in the last analysis accounts for change. Bowne will have nothing to do with the Spinozistic view that the world is an attribute of the infinite substance. The world depends upon a divine activity and this activity is an expression of God's will In Bowne's words, "the infinite

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131 Borden P. Bowne *Metaphysics*, "revised ed", p. 197
132. Borden P Bowne, *Studies in Theism*, p 308

is for ever energizing according to certain laws, and producing thereby a great variety of products".[133]

In speaking of the will of the infinite self, Bowne, quite properly points out that care must be taken not to apply to the divine willing the limitations of the human.

> As in human consciousness there are many features which are not essential to consciousness, and which arise from our limitations, so in human willing there are many features which are not essential to willing, and which result from our finiteness. Since we get our objects of volition gradually and by experience, we tend to think of will as a momentary activity which comes into our life now and then, but which, for the most part, is quiescent. In this way we come to think of an act of will as having nothing to do with the maintenance of a fixed state, but only as producing a change.[134]

The divine will has nothing of this flickering character. It is not to be atomized into acts of will; it is indivisible, never in abeyance, the cause of permanence no less than *change.*

Summary and Comparison

Both our thinkers approach the problem of change from a metaphysical point of view, that is to say, they are opposed to any merely naturalistic explanation of change. In the view of both philosophers change is initiated by the will of the absolute self. But if Rāmānuja and Bowne come together at this point, they also part company. For Bowne the world is God's creative act, while for Rāmānuja the world, although it comes into being at the bidding of Brahman, existed in the form of a highly subtle matter in Brahman, that is, it existed in him as a potentiality

> When the period of a great *pralaya* draws towards its close, the divine *Supreme Person*, remembering *the* constitution of the world previous to the *pralaya*, and forming the volition 'May I become manifold', separates into its constituent elements the whole mass of

133. Borden P. Bowne, *Philosophy of Theism*, p 181
134 *Ibid*, p. 186-187.

enjoying souls and objects of enjoyment which, during the *pralaya* state, had been merged in him so as to possess a separate existence (not actual but) potential only, and then emits the entire world.[135]

Bowne somewhat in the same vein says:

> God neither made the world from nothing as a raw material, nor from himself; both notions are absurd; but he caused that to be which before was not.[136]

We have also seen that for Rāmānuja, the individual selves and the world of matter form the body of Brahman. This leaves, or appears to leave, less independence to the finite self than Bowne ascribes to it. For Bowne, the finite self, once created, is, so to speak, on its own. It is, in some sense autonomous but recognizes a spiritual dependence.

Rāmānuja says:

> In this sense, then, all sentient and non-sentient beings together constitute the body of the Supreme Person, for they are completely controlled and supported by him for his own ends, and are absolutely subordinate to him.[137]

Bowne, in somewhat similar fashion points out that

> If any finite thing can be found which is capable of acting from itself and for itself, it has in that fact the only possible test of reality, as distinguished from phenomenality. But this possibility can be found only in the finite spirit. It avails nothing against this conclusion to say that the world ground may posit impersonal agents as well as personal ones for the notion of the impersonal finite vanishes, upon analysis, into phenomenality.[138]

Both thinkers agree that the absolute self is transcendent and yet immanent in the world. And this absolute self is considered by both thinkers as a personality, that it is the source of change, as it is the principle of permanence.

135. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam* (tr. by Thibaut), p 334
136. Borden P. Bowne, *Philosophy of Theism*, pp 179-180.
137. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 424.
138. Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed.", p. 99

> He (Brahman) brooded over himself, and having thus brooded he sent forth all whatever there is. Having sent forth he entered it. Having entered it he became *Sat* and *tyat*, defined and undefined, supported and non-supported, knowledge and non-knowledge, real and unreal.[139]

This compares favourably, except for selves, with what Bowne writes:

> By virtue of its position as World-ground, the infinite must be viewed as the primal source of all finite existence. Since the finite has no ground of being in itself, its nature and relations must be originally determined by the infinite; and hence the finite can be properly understood or comprehended only from the side of the infinite.[140]

Neither Rāmānuja or Bowne is particularly lucid with regard to the relation between the absolute self, the finite self and the world of matter. In so far as Rāmānuja places matter in Brahman itself, he avoids the problems raised by a theory of creation such as Bowne's. For Rāmānuja matter is a 'given' factor in Brahman. It is eternally existing although it is under Brahman's control. In the view of both Rāmānuja and Bowne pure identity apart from all differences is nothing but an empty abstraction, but whereas the Indian thinker is able to explain differentiation in terms of elements present in Brahman from the beginning, no such way is open to Bowne.

THE PROBLEM OF SPACE AND TIME IN RĀMĀNUJA AND BOWNE

SPACE AND TIME IN RĀMĀNUJA

The idealism of Rāmānuja is not of the sort which would deny the metaphysical reality of time and space. Indeed, he strikes out against the view that Brahman exists beyond space and time. The possibility of anything so existing is to him inconceivable. Existence itself implies

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139. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, (tr. by Thibaut), p. 405.
140. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed.", p. 104.

time and place.[141] When it is said that Brahman is beyond time and space all that we mean or can mean is that Brahman, unlike human beings, has always existed. There was never a time when he was not, nor a place from which he was absent, which is to say that Brahman is "co-eval with time and co-existent with space."[142] Yet he is limited by neither. He is the master of even time and space.

In Rāmānuja's view time and space are not finite, although in human reckoning time is divided into moments, just as space is divided into points. Time and space contain all finite things, 'substand' them, but as infinite time and space are not limited to finite things, but, as we have just said, are co-eval with Brahman. However, to Brahman time and space are finite, since they come within the compass of the Divine Mind which limits them.[143] While it is true that Brahman is co-eval with time, he is beyond time in the sense that he is not time itself, but the master of time. Things are brought within time as they are located in space through the activity of Brahman. He himself remains unaffected by the human judgments which make it possible to speak of 'before, now and after'. Space-time categories are human and not divine.

In all this Rāmānuja is concerned to show that the external is immanent in the temporal process and yet transcends it. Change is the play of the infinite in the temporal process. And the splendour of the infinite is time as eternity. In the mutable world of phenomena time is finite, even if endless. But since Brahman has endowed temporal existence with a meaning, there is an infinite aspect to the world which lifts it above the plane of space-time. It is true that the world can only be viewed in terms of a space-time series, but it is also true that the self

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141 K C Varadachari, *Sri Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge*, p 47

142. *Ibid*, p. 47

143 *Ibid*, p 47.

determines this series, for space-time constructs are the work of the mind In themselves neither time nor space yield any meaning, but become meaningful only in terms of the overall purpose whose goal is soul making[144]

To the question whether time and space have an ontological status or are merely phenomenal, Rāmānuja's answer is that they are both They are ontological realities in the sense that they are co existent with Brahman and they are phenomenal in the sense that they are experienced only in the sense world of change and becoming

THE TREATMENT OF SPACE IN BOWNE

There is a confusion in Bowne with regard to his concepts of space and time While Bowne holds that space is a phenomenal reality, he appears to treat time as an ontological reality at times and at others as a phenomenal reality This confusion is pointed ou by Professor Millard and others Millard says that Bowne "tended to relegate both space and time to the realm of the phenomenal only in spite of his assertion that time is the form of change and his equaion of being and activity"[145] We shall, therefore, treat space and time separately here

With regard to space, Bowne rejects the view according to which space is an order of being, a peculiar system of relations among the external objects, absolutely independent of mind *Relations between things he argues, keep* changing, while space itself does not change Now this unchanging character of space is not for Bowne exidence of its objectivity, an objectivity which he denies, but revelatory rather of the inherent nature of the mind Space is a form of human intuition It has no extra-mental reality If we necessarily experience things in space it is because of the nature of our sensibility Bowne writes in this connection

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144 P N Srinivasachari *The Philosophy of Visiṣṭadvaita* p 499

145 R. M Millard Space Time and Space time *The Philosophical Forum* Vol XIII, 1955 p 29

> The nature of our sensibility determines us to perceive vibrating objects as coloured, and we cannot perceive them otherwise; but the necessity is in ourselves. On this account the argument that things are coloured because we must perceive them as such, loses all weight; and on the same account the argument that things are in space because we must intuit them spatially, loses all its weight.[146]

> Space, then, is a form of intuition. From human point of view, it comprises all reality in the unity of its immediate activity, and hence is everywhere. For by omnipresence we can mean nothing more than this immediate action upon all reality.[147]

But this entails no limitation upon the infinite. For, to suppose otherwise is to confound space as principle with space as limitation. In the human view, space has a double aspect. "It represents not only a principle of intuition, but also a limitation of our agency."[148] The reason for this is plain. The organism which conditions our mental activity has space relations, and thus we naturally appear to be located and limited in space. But this location is of the organism only and this limitation is only the result of our dynamic limitations. It consists solely in the fact that our immediate action upon reality is limited. In other words, "we are where we act."[149] As comprehending all reality at once, the infinite, is obvious, is not limited in this sense and hence space, as limitation, cannot be affirmed of it.

THE TREATMENT OF TIME IN BOWNE

If there is no doubt in Bowne's mind about the phenomenal character of space, he appears to be reluctant about assigning the same character to time. Is time an existence, or a mode of existence, or only a mode of our thinking? In his epistemology, Bowne points out the "time is primarily a law of thought whereby the mind relates events under the

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146. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed.", p 125
147. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
148. *Ibid*, p. 154
149. *Ibid.*, p 154.

form of antecedence and sequence, and this makes the temporal experience possible."[150] Whatever the case may be with regard to space, Bowne is sure that time is not merely a form of intuition. He points out that "we grasp coexistences *in a single space-timage which is sui generis;* and when we think the things away, we are still able to outline the space as such."[151] But time is different. "We cannot comprehend events in a single temporal image, and when the events are thought away there is nothing remaining, even in imagination, which has a temporal character."[152] The fact is that all our representations of time are images borrowed from space, and all alike contain contradictions of the time-idea.[153] For example, we think of time as an endless straight-line, which belies the very nature of time, for the points of such a line coexist, while of the time-line only the present point exists. Even if we think of time as a flowing point which describes a straight line, we are forced to assume implicitly a space through which the point moves. Again, if we form a conception of earlier and later, here also we are positing a line over which we are to move in thought, and we measure the time by the motion and its direction. "The temporal before-and-after is represented only by the spatial before-and-after."[154] In whatever dimension we think of time, we have only space-images, which are applied to time only by metaphor.

But, we cannot call time a form of intuition since there is no special presentation corresponding to it. Bowne says: "In itself it is rather a certain unpicturable order of events. Whenever we attempt to picture it we replace temporal sequence by spatial sequence."[155] The popular view of time as something which exists apart from things, losing

150. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 66

151. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p. 164

152. *Ibid.*, p. 165

153. *Ibid*, p. 165.

154. *Ibid*, p. 165.

155. *Ibid*, p. 165.

nothing by their absence and gaining nothing by their presence, apart from its mistaken assimilation of time to space, errs especially in that it divorces time from reality. Such a divorce is contrary to reason which, in Bowne's view, forbids all plurality of independent experiences.[156] Time cannot be considered as independent of reality. But can it be considered as a real existence? Those who hold to the idea of a real, objective time, commonly argue that our mental life itself proves its validity. To this Bowne makes a lengthy answer. He says:

> The believer in a real time will affirm with great positiveness that our mental life itself bears witness to the reality of time . . . . We know that we have lived through a real past, and that we are now able to compare it with a real present. Any attempt to deny time, it is said, must shatter on this fact. But this objection largely depends on overlooking the distinction between the phenomenal and the ontological. No one can think of denying the relations of time in experience. But these relations are established by the mind itself, and if there were not something non-temporal in the mind they could not exist for us at all. The succession in consciousness to which the realist appeals so confidently is the very thing unchanging and timeless in the mind, the knowledge of succession could never arise. The mind must gather up its experiences in a single timeless act in order to become aware of succession. The conceptions which are arranged in a temporal order must coexist in the timeless act which grasps and arranges them. The conception of sequence not only does not involve a sequence of conceptions, but it would be impossible if it did. The perception of time, then, is as timeless as the perception of space is spaceless. The things which are perceived in time must yet coexist in timeless thought in order to be perceived. The admission of ontological temporal differences in thought would make thought impossible.[157]

The upshot of Bowne's reasoning here is that time can only be allowed a phenomenal existence and that thought, so far from being in time, is the source and founder of

156 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, pp 167-169.
157 *Ibid.*, pp 173-74

temporal relations. So far as supposed ontological time is concerned, Bowne calls it "a shadow of experience" whose "necessity is merely a consequence of the temporal law as a rule of mental procedure."[158]

Yet Bowne does sometimes speak as if time had more than a phenomenal existence. For example, in order to prove that the concept of time is not *sui generis*, he begins by saying that "memory and self-consciousness are necessary conditions for the emergence of time.[159] But he then proceeds to state that "this reference to memory does not quite reach the root of the matter; for while memory serves to bring the idea into consciousness, memory in turn implies time."[160] Now in terms of Bowne's own premises, either the reality of time antedates the fact of memory, or the reality of memory antedates the fact of time. Yet if memory implies time, time must be an integral part of the self. And if time is thus an integral part of the self, it has an ontological status. By and large, however, Bowne is concerned to prove the phenomenal character of time.

SUMMARY AND COMPARISON

In their theories of space and time there appears to be little in common between Rāmānuja and Bowne. To the one space and time, since they are co-eval with Brahman, are ontological in character; to the other space has a merely phenomenal existence, and so likewise has time, though with regard to the latter, Bowne seems to vacillate, speaking on occasion as if time were ontological Time is conceived by Bowne usually as the order of relations in our experience, whereas for Rāmānuja time is a 'special power' by which Brahman unfolds his activity. And space is another such power Both are under the control of the absolute Brahman. In the Indian philosopher's view space and time are connected with the change in matter, and are means for the

158 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p 174

159. Borden P Bowne, *Introduction to Psychological Theory*, p 129.

160 Ibid p 129

unfoldment of the activity of matter, matter in a subtle state constituting the body of Brahman. It may be added that neither thinker goes very deeply into the problems of space and time, though Rāmānuja's view appears to be the more consistent.

THE PROBLEM OF THE SELF

If mind and self are distinguished, as we believe they should be, and if the chief characteristic of mind is thought, what is the self ? Many answers have been given to this question. One thing appears to be clear : The problem is not merely one of explaining thought, but accounting for the individuality that owns these thoughts. The empirical account of the nature of the self exhibits its own inadequacy. The empiricist tends to use the terms mind and self interchangeably and to make mind equivalent to sensation. The result is that the self appears as dissipated and unconnected bits of mental reactions with no unifying principle underlying them.

Unlike the empiricist whose view of the self does not reach beyond the level of sense experience, the idealist recognizes a trans-empirical level. Only so is it possible, he believes, to explain the unity and individuality which for him are indubitable characteristics of the self. To the modern idealist the self is a dynamic unity of conscious functions, a unity which, on the human level appears as a stage in the process of self-expression of the ultimate spiritual reality. The self emerges with "the evolution of the organic from the inorganic, and determines and is determined by the latter, and enters into cognitive and active relations with it."[161] In these cognitive and active relations the self realizes itself as a value in itself. In the view of idealists, such a conception of the self avoids the abstractions of the empiricist. It sees the self as a concrete reality whose individuality is inalienable. More-

161 H Mohan Bhattacharya, *The Principles of Philosophy*, p. 268

over, it is a conception which is consistent with the notion, dear to the idealist, of the universe as tending towards the realization of values Individuality expresses itself as determinateness, as objective continuity, in other words, as a definite center of experience Further, the absolute idealist holds that these definite centers of experience precede conscious self-hood in the finite, indeed furnish the presupposition and materials of such self-hood To the question, what is the finite self, we may accordingly say that it is the *center of awakening* of a determinate world which is its pre-supposition Finite individuality is self-*consciousness acting as an experiencer in any empirical* situation To the personal idealist like Bowne, the self is created as such

In the foregoing general conception of the Self Ramānuja and Bowne, while there are differences between them, join hands To both philosophers the personal self is a concrete unity of experience, involving self-conscious ness and value, and expressing itself in dynamic activty

RĀMANUJA S CONCEPTION OF THE SELF

Our Indian thinker is at great pains to show that the *finite self* is nothing but the *knowing* 'I' "*As is proved* by perception," he writes, "and as also results from reasoning and tradition, and from its connection with ignorance, the Self presents itself as a knowing 'I'[162] It is not entirely clear whether Ramānuja views the absolute self *in the same light, although it may* be fairly inferred from what he says that such is the case We have already seen that for him the Absolute Self is not an aggregate of un related reals, or a monad of monads, nor is it absolute absolving all finitude Rather the Absolute "is the Self of all creation imparting reality to the finite self and through it to matter"[163]

162 Sri Ramanuja *Sri Bhashyam,* p 72

163 P N Srinivasachari *Ramanuja's Idea of the Finite Self* p 24

Since the finite self is thus an essential unit in Brahman, and is unrealizable apart from him, it is called one of the aspects of Brahman.[164] Just as the created world is an aspect of Brahman, so likewise is finite selfhood. The infinite self is immanent in the finite, but is not exhausted by it. "The relation between the finite self and Brahman may be compared to the light radiating from a luminous body."[165] What the comparison is especially designed to bring out is that on the one hand the finite self is nothing apart from Brahman and on the other is not swallowed up in him.

> The principle of *dharma buūta jñāna* saves Rāmānuja from the perils of monadism and pluralism (of the atomic kind) and the idea of *aṇutva* makes the absolute a concrete universal.[166]

It may be mentioned in passing that the simile of a luminous body and its rays is used by some Christian Church Fathers to explain the relation of God and Son.

The Finite Self as an Aspect of the Absolute Self

Considered as an aspect of the Absolute, it is possible to see the finite self as constantly striving to unite its fragments of insights and intuitions into a whole, and by employing such categories as causality and the subject-object relation. It is in the last analysis bent upon establishing a logical tie between itself and the absolute thought. But what exactly is the nature of the relation which Rāmānuja holds exists between the absolute self and the finite self? The relation, it would appear, is in some sort a relation of identity. We may infer from this fact that Rāmānuja subscribes to the identity of cause and effect in the sense of their unbroken continuity, rejecting any view such as atomism which would separate them or abstractionism which would regard one apart from the other. To him the cause is not only temporally prior to its effect as well as sequence.

164. P N Srinivasachari, *Rāmānuja's Idea of the Finite Self*, p. 24.
165. *Ibid.*, p 25
166. *Ibid*, p 26

The cause is not the contradiction of the effect, but is co-ordinated and continuous with it. Thus there is no break between the infinite self and the finite selves to which it gives rise. The process of self-manifestation which characterizes Brahman is one that implies unity, continuity and agency. But the infinite self is not to be confused with the finite self. The finite self comes into being through an act of will by which the absolute finitizes itself. The relation of the absolute self to the finite self is as the relation of self and body.[167]

In an effort to make the matter clearer Rāmānuja appeals to the logic of the relation of universal and particlar, or genus and species. Every term, concept, or thing refers ultimately to the absolute reality or absolute self. Any reference to a particular self, say the individual *Rāma*, is also a reference to the universal, namely, Brahman. In this way the finite self is inseparable from the absolute self, just as the absolute self is inseparably related to the finite self.

Involved further in the logic of the finite self in relation to the absolute is the notion of whole and part. The finite is an aspect or part of the absolute, but the relationship must not be taken in a spatial sense. For the self does not admit of spatial separation or division, being a spiritual unity. Nor is the absolute self a quantitative infinite extended in space. We cannot, either, consider the finite self as an image of the absolute, as for example, the reflection of the moon in water is an image of the moon. What best suggests the nature of the relationship is again the radiation of light from a luminous body. The rays are inseparable from their source at the same time that they are different from it. Or again the absolute self is like the power and the finite self is like that in which the power inheres.[168] In Rāmānuja's words, "As the light of a fire which abides in one place only spreads all around,

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167. Sri Rāmānuja, *Bhagavad Gita*, vii, 4-5.
168. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 564.

thus this whole world is the power (*śakti*) of the highest Brahman."[169] But that in which the power inheres differs from the source of that power. For example, the finite self cannot create the world, whereas the absolute can.

A question confronts us here. If all individual selves are all equally aspects of Brahman, all equally actuated by the absolute self, all alike knowing subjects, how is it that among these selves there are differences of quality, some leading noble lives, others not The qusstion is an old one and Rāmānuja's answer is neither better or worse than many. He says that the differences are owing to the differences between the bodies of selves. He writes :

> Although all souls are essentially of the same nature in so far as they are parts of Brahman, knowing subjects, and so on, the permissions and exclusions referred to are possible for the reason that each individual soul is joined to some particular body, pure or impure, whether of a *Brāhmaṇa* or *Kṣatriya* or *Vaiśya* or *Śudra* and so on. 'As in the case of fire and so on.' All fire is of the same kind, and yet one willingly fetches fire from the house of a *Brāhmaṇa*, while one shuns fire from a place where dead bodies are *burnt*. And from a *Brāhmaṇa* one accepts food without any objection, while one refuses food from a low person.[170]

In this passage, as in others that might be quoted, it is clear that for Rāmānuja the differences between selves are ascribable to the differences between the bodies to which they are attached.

The Finite Self as the Ethical Ego

The conception of a bare absolute in philosophy cannot staisfy the demands of the moral and religious consciousness either with respect to moral freedom or personal aspiration. Morality, if it means anything at all, postulates the reality of the good and the conditions which bring it into relation to the individual life So for Rāmānuja the

169. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 564.
170. *Ibid*, p. 565

absolute is not aloofness but fullness of being, and the selves through which it expresses itself are not just so many particulars, or duplications of one another, but each is a unique individuality This individuality is not something passive or inert, it is an activity, in the last analysis, an activity of Brahman Through this activity 'the universal becomes the personal and the absolute becomes the moral governor"[171] In some such way, the self activity of spirit grows into the self consciousness of personality

As we have said, no absolutism is morally tenable which would deny the freedom of the finite self to act It is just *such absolutism that Ramanuja rejects He unequivocably* asserts the freedom of the self

> It (the individual self) is free, for if it were dependent on the highest self, the whole body of scriptural injunctions and prohibitions would be unmeaning For commandments can be addressed to such agents only as are capable of entering on action or refraining from action, according to their own thought and will[172]

But this assertion of free will raises the question, what is the relation between the activity of the finite self and the absolute self? Ramanuja's answer is that while the finite self is capable of freely entering upon a course of action, the absolute self assists him in carrying it out He writes

> The inwardly ruling highest Self promotes action in so far as it regards in the case of any action the volitional effort made by the individual soul and then aids that effort by granting its favour or permission (*anumati*), action is not possible without permission on the part of the highest Self In this way (i e since the action primarily depends on the volitional effort of the soul) injunctions and prohibitions are not devoid of meaning[173]

All the activity of the individual self is thus a joint activity Ramanuja illustrates by means of an example

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171 P N Srinivasachari *Ramanuja s Idea of the Finite Self* p 28

172 Sri Ramanuja *Sri Bhashyam* p 557

173 *Ibid* p 557

> The case is analogous to that of property of which two men are joint owners. If one of these wishes to transfer that property to a third person he cannot do so without the permission of his partner, but that that permission is given is after all his own doing, and hence the fruit of the action properly belongs to him only.[174]

We may say, then, that the individual self is free in so far as it can take independent action, but the process of carrying such action involves both the finite and the absolute self. How the existence of evil fits into this scheme is a question with which we shall deal latter.

Individual Self as the Body of the Absolute Brahman.

Although each individual self is in some sense a part of Brahman, it has also, Rāmānuja never tires of insisting, a monadic existence of its own. "It persists for ever in its own atomic uniqueness."[175] Or as Rāmānuja himself puts it, "the self is not omnipresent, but on the contrary of atomic size (*anu*)."[176] If this were not so, it would hardly make sense to speak of the self as passing out of the body, as is affirmed by scripture. The self is not omnipresent, for "All this going, and so on, cannot be reconciled with the soul being present everywhere."[177]

Affirming that the self is atomic and unique, Rāmānuja declares further that each self forms part of the body of the absolute self. We have already had occasion to mention this doctrine. And we now raise the question, in what sense can the individual self be considered the body of the Absolute? Now Rāmānuja defines body here in rather a peculiar way. After examining the traditional definitions, he sets forth his own. "Any substance," he says, "(spiritual substance included) which a sentient soul is capable of completely controlling and supporting for its own purposes, and which stands to the soul in an entirely subordi-

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174 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, (tr by Thibaut), p 557
175 P N Srinivasachari, *Rāmānuja's Idea of the Finite Self*, p 56
176 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 546
177 *Ibid*, p 546

nate relation is the body of that soul."[178] In the light of this definition, Rāmānuja's contention that the individual selves form the body of the absolute self becomes intelligible at least. Further, because of this relationship it makes sense to speak of Brahman as both cause and effect, as active and also as acted upon, as both doer and sufferer. Thus Rāmānuja writes:

> As Brahman has all sentient and non-sentient things for its body, and constitutes the *Self* of that body, there is nothing contrary to reason in Brahman being connected with two states, a causal and an effected one, the essential characteristics of which are expansion, on the one hand, and contraction, on the other; for this expansion and contraction belong (not to Brahman itself, but) to the sentient and non-sentient beings[179]

Yet, with all his efforts to explain the relation of the individual self to the absolute, Rāmānuja's position is not easily grasped. And it has baffled his commentators. If his theory is not itself contradictory, the language he uses in describing it certainly is. He is vehemently critical of his predecessors' view of identity and difference, and most puzzling of all is his theory of identity in difference. Some of his commentators believe that he advocates all these relations, while appearing to reject them. According to others he holds to still a fourth theory, one which is peculiarly his own. It is called *apṛthaksiddhi* or inseparable dependence. We believe that this is his theory and we shall concentrate upon it here.

According to Rāmānuja the individual selves are organically related to the absolute self, so that apart from the latter they have no independent existence. At the same time Rāmānuja insists that even though they thus qualify the absolute self, the finite selves have an individuality of their own, which is inalienable. As essence they are one with the absolute; as modes they are distinct from it. If we were to give Rāmānuja's position here a logical form, it would be as follows Every judgment is a synthesis of

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178. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 424.
179. *Ibid*, p. 422.

distincts. Subject and predicate each represents a distinct meaning, though both have reference to the same substance. If S and P were wholly different, the judgment S is P would be impossible, while if S and P were absolutely identical, the judgment S is P would be a mere tautology. Pure identity and pure difference are alike abstractions. It is just because S and P are neither wholly identical nor wholly different that S is P has propositional significance. So what Rāmānuja is affirming is identity—in and through—and because—of difference, or identity as qualified-by-difference.[180] The view is called *Viśiṣṭādvaita*.

The Finite Self as Knower

Here we should like to place special emphasis on the self as an agent in the knowing process. Curiously enough there is a strong pragmatic strain in Rāmānuja's thinking in this connection. Knowledge is not mere receptivity, but a form of work and inseparable from it. Rooted in sense experiences knowledge varies in accordance with the different sense organs involved in acquiring it. This knowledge is pertinent to the self only in so far as it is associated with the particular body the self possesses. These points are at least intimated in a difficult passage from Rāmānuja which we proceed to quote.

> Knowledge (the quality) which is in itself unlimited, is capable of contraction and expansion . . . . In the so-called *Kṣetrajña* condition of the *Self*, knowledge is owing to the influence of work (*Karman*), of a concreted nature; as it more or less adapts itself to work of different kinds, and is variously determined by the different senses. With reference to this various flow of knowledge as due to the senses, it is spoken of as rising and setting, and the *Self* possesses the quality of an agent. As this quality is not, however, essential, but originated by action, the *Self* is essentially unchanging. This changeful quality of being a knower can belong only to the *Self* whose essential nature is knowledge; not possibly to the non-intelligent *ahamkāra*.[181]

180. Chandradhar Sharma, *Indian Philosophy*, p. 510.
181. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 63.

The changeful character of finite knowledge is owing to its association with the body, while the capacity to know at all is associated only with selves. *Further, absolute* knowledge, the knowledge of Brahman, is differentiated from human knowledge precisely by its unchanging non-fortuitous character.

The Finite Self as a Religious Personality

In the evolutionary process the finite self gets caught up in matter, and matter develops according to the previously acquired character (*Karma*) of the self. If the spirit becomes enslaved to phenomena and crushed by suffering, the question arises as to how it is that spirit comes under the dominion of the material body. Such dominion, Rāmānuja answers, is owing to mistaken identity or illusion. It is an illusion that comes about simply as the result of the association between the finite spirit and matter. Spirit falls into the mistake of regarding itself as a part of matter instead of ceaselessly recognizing its life as an aspect of the life of the Absolute.[182] The finite self never achieves its true satisfaction till it learns to distinguish itself from matter and comprehend its attributive relationship to the absolute self.

Such comprehension is the goal of the process of *yoga*. We can not here go into any lengthy account of *yoga* Suffice it to mention those factors which have a bearing upon the concentration of the finite self upon the absolute. On the moral level this concentration is called *Karma yoga*. It is an attempt to overcome the self's attachments to matter through contemplation of the infinite spirit, and so achieve, upon the concentration of the finite self upon the absolute. however gradually, a detachment from the goals set by sense and utility. In this way a worshipful attitude is developed. Detachment leads the self to turn inwards in an effort to achieve understanding of itself, a process called by Rāmānuja, *jnāna yoga*. The soul comes to realize itself as an aspect of the Supreme Self and acquires a continuous

182. P. N. Srinivasachari, *Rāmānuja's Idea of the Finite Self*, p. 69.

loving devotion towards that self, *bhakti yoga*, as it is called. The object of this very brief survey is to make clear that Rāmānuja views the self from a religious point of view, that is, as an aspect of the highest self or God.

BOWNE'S VIEW OF THE SELF

Self or personality is the central concept in Bowne's philosophy. For in his view personality is the key to reality and hence the answer to all the problems raised by ontological inquiry. Self, then, is the primary concept, a tool in the hands of Bowne by means of which he believes he can dispose of, on the one hand, materialism—and all forms of naturalistic empirism which would deny the unity and identity proper to the self, and on the other hand, of those impersonal absolutisms which end in the denial of the integrity and individuality of the self.[183] To Bowne, as we have seen, reality is above all an activity and the type of this activity is the self. In his view, as in that of Rāmānuja, the self is a thinking, acting, spiritual personality, which wills, feels, and is given in immedate experience.[184]

The Self Not a Part of the Absolute

It is in his view of the relation of the self to the Absolute that Bowne appears to differ most drastically from Rāmānuja. He will have nothing to do with the notion that the self is a part, or a modification, or a potentiality, or an emanation of the Supreme Self. The whole conception, he argues, stems from the erroneous substantialization of the absolute. Thus he writes:

> When we speak of the infinite as substance, the misleading analogies of sense experience at once present it as admitting of division, aggregation, etc.; but when we think of it as an agent, these fancies disappear of themselves. As an agent, it is a unit, and not a sum or an aggregate. It is, then, without parts; and the notions of divisibility and aggregation do not apply. Hence we cannot view the finite as a part of the infinite,

183 Borden P. Bowne, *Studies in Theology*, pp. 376-78
184. *Ibid.*, p 11

as an emanation from the infinite, or as partaking of the infinite substance; for all these expressions imply the divisibility of the infinite, and also its stuffy nature.[185]

In the same way Bowne rejects the notion that the finite is a mode of the infinite; he writes of 'mode' as follows:

> In its ordinary use it is based on the notion of passive substance, or pure being. Being is said to be one in essence, but various in mode; as the same raw material may be built into many forms. Accordingly all finite things are called modes or modifications of the infinite.[186]

Given Bowne's notion of reality as agency first and last, it is obvious that the self is no more a mode of the absolute than it is a part. But let us first complete the argument with regard to part-whole conception

> The notion of division has no application to true being, but only to aggregates; and second, if it has application, the result of dividing the infinite would be to cancel it, and replace it by the sum of the finite But this would be to return to the impossible pluralism of uncritical speculation. The attempt to divide and retain the unity at the same time is as if one should speak of the mathematical unity as producing number by self-diremption, and as remaining a unit after division. The necessary unity of the infinite forbids all attempts to identify it with the finite, either totally or partially.[187]

The upshot of the matter is that if the finite is anything substantial, it must be viewed as ontologically distinct from the infinite, not as produced by it, but as created by it Creation alone is capable of explaining the reality of the finite and the unity of the infinite Grant the reality of the finite and the way is open to conceiving of it in terms of agency, rather than as made of some stuff And as agency the finite is posited by the infinite.[188]

185. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed", p 96
186. *Ibid*, p. 97.
187. *Ibid*, p. 97.
188. *Ibid*, pp 96-97.

To return now to the finite considered as a mode of the infinite, Bowne argues that "the unity of being is compatible with a plurality of attributes only as each attribute is an attribute of the entire thing."[189] And he goes on to say that "any conception of diverse states which are states of only a part of the being would destroy its unity."[190] Accordingly "the entire being must be present in each state; and this cannot be so long as the notion of quantity is applied to the problem.[191] There is but one way in which the unity of the infinite and the modality of the finite can be preserved and that is by considering being as an agent and things as constant forms of the activity of this agent. And this indeed is Bowne's view of the nature of the self and its relation to the infinite. But he is careful to distinguish between two logically possible conceptions of the finite. It may be regarded either as merely a form of energizing on the part of the infinite, in which case it has a purely phenomenal existence; or it may be regarded as a substantial creation by the infinite.[192] Bowne takes the latter view, but adds that in no case can the infinite be identified with the finite either totally or partially.

On Bowne's theory, then, the individual finite selves are relatively independent, endowed with capacity for thoughts and feelings and volitions peculiar to them alone. They exhibit some measure of self-control and self-direction, and hence a certain selfhood and relative autonomy. It is this fact that "constitutes us real persons, or rather it is the meaning of our personality."[193] At the same time this life cannot be regarded as self-sufficient or altogether autonomous, for we do not know how this life is possible; we only know that it is.

Memory and Self-Consciousness as the Essence of the Self

The self is not merely a flux of experience or a bundle of impressions, but exhibits permanence as well as change,

189. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed", p. 96.
190 *Ibid*, p 96
191 *Ibid.*, p. 96
192 *Ibid*, p 96

or change in permanence. What is the basis of this permanence? Now Bowne points out that "we are not conscious of a permanent substance, but a permanent self; and this permanence is not revealed, but constituted by memory and self-consciousness."[194] He goes on to explain: "memory does not make, but reveals the fact that our being is continuous. If our being were discontinuous, or if we were numerically distinct from ourselves at an earlier date memory would be impossible."[195] But Bowne poses a question at this point. How can the matter of a permanent self be reconciled with continuity of activity? Such reconciliation, he says, "can be done only as the agent himself does it; and the agent does it only by memory and self-consciousness, whereby a fixed point of personality is secured, and the past and present are bound together in the unity of one consciousness."[196] But if memory may thus be taken as the basis of accounting for believing in the unity of the self, it is important to remember that for Bowne the self is a metaphysical ultimate, a key, as we have seen, to the nature of reality itself.

The Finite Self as Knower

Knowledge presupposes a knower and this knower, as Bowne never tires of insisting, is rational and spiritual. Were this not so the world could never get itself known Bowne writes: "The world of experience exists for us only through a rational spiritual principle by which we reproduce it for our thought, and it has its existence apart from us only through a rational spiritual principle on which it depends, and the rational nature of which it expresses."[197] Unless we recognize the existence of selves and of a supreme self at their head, we cannot hope to explain the world of nature and experience. "A world of persons with a supreme person at the head," says Bowne, "is the conception to which we come as the result of our critical

194 Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed", p. 64.
195 *Ibid*, p 64.
196. Borden P. Bowne, *Personalism*, p. 110.
197. *Ibid*, p 278.

reflections"[198] Critical' here has a Kantian sense and a Kantian upshot, which is that "the world of objects which we call nature is no substantial existence by itself, and still less a self running system apart from intelligence, but only the flowing expression and means of communication of those personal beings It is throughout, dependent, instrumental and phenomenal"[199]

The Finite Self as a Moral and Religious Personality

Human life is not to be considered mechanically in terms of bodies, but rather in terms of the spirit This indeed is the very burden of Bowne's philosophy

> Out of the invisible comes the meaning that transforms the curious sets of motions into terms of personality and gives them a human significance Indeed, our estimate even of the body itself depends largely upon its connection with the hidden life of the spirit A human form as an object in space, apart from our experience of it as the instrument and expression of personal life, would have little beauty or attraction, and when it is described in anatomical terms there is nothing in it that we should desire it The secret of its beauty and value lies in the invisible realm"[200]

This invisible realm is the realm of infinite spirit and it is our dependence upon it that lends meaning to our experiences in life But this dependence in no way lends support to the view that finite spirit is unreal 'The dependence of the finite spirit, in the sense of its non-self sufficiency, does not prove its nothingness or unreality '[201] And Bowne adds that this dependence 'must be interpreted by the facts and not by the dictionary'[202] The facts suggest that such dependency does jeopardize the freedom of the finite spirit, as any attempt to identify the finite and the infinite and this because "their

198 Borden P Bowne *Personalism* p 278
199 *Ibid* p 271
200 *Ibid* p 281
201 *Ibid* p 282
202 *Ibid* p 284

mutual otherness is necessary if we are to escape the destruction of all thought and life"[203] Indeed the existence of the finite self as a religious and moral personality depends upon this mutual otherness At the same time the otherness must not be interpreted as unrelatedness

That the self is by nature religious is for Bowne an indisputable fact It is a fact of human experience, "and must receive its recognition and interpretation as belonging to reality"[204] And so interpreted we are pre-eminently led "to a personal conception of existence"[205] Religion is a function of our whole nature "Intellect, heart, conscience, and will contribute to our religious conceptions"[206] The life of religion consists not merely in the recognition of the infinite, but worship of the infinite as a religious object which satisfies both the intellect and the emotions, and underlies our ethical strivings and aspirations. As religions evolve they inevitably "take the direction of affirming not only a supreme reason but also a supreme righteousness"[207] Not only does the religious life depend on worshipping the object which is supreme reason and supreme righteousness and supreme goodness, but also supreme love All this is involved in the religious personality, and involved also is a worthy conception of man[208]

Further, religion has no meaning unless it is lived, that is to say, "for the practical realization of divine presence, logic and speculation can do little for us"[209] The goal of religion is precisely this practical realization of the divine presence; "this belief must be lived to acquire any real substance or controlling character"[210] If Bowne has no formula as to how one goes about acquiring this practical

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203 Borden P Bowne, *Personalism*, p 292
204 *Ibid*, p 292
205 *Ibid*, p 293
206 *Ibid*, p 295
207 *Ibid*, pp 298 302
208 *Ibid*, p 325
209 *Ibid*, p 325
210 *Ibid*, p 295

relation to divinity or giving expression to it, he is never in doubt about the practical character of the relationship with the infinite God. He points out that it must express itself in worship, in the service of the weaker, and in the belief in the immanent presence of God. The role of philosophy, he thinks, is to replace "the infinitely far God by the God who is infinitely near, and in whom we live and move and have our being."[211]

SUMMARY AND COMPARISON

It is plain that our two philosophers, if they do not see eye to eye at all points with regard to the nature of the self, yet exhibit a substantial measure of agreement. Though it is true that for Rāmānuja the individual self is a part or aspect of Brahman, yet as we have tried to explain, the meaning which he assigns to this conception is one that brings his view into line, at least in some measure, with that of Bowne. The self is not a part of Brahman in a spatial or extensional sense, for Brahman admits of no division or fragmentation. The whole or Brahman is not extended or material, and hence in speaking of the self as part of Brahman, Rāmānuja's meaning is that selves are so many distinguishing attributes (*Viśesana*) of Brahman. Each self, as he puts it, constitutes one place (*deśa*) of Brahman. Now Bowne also rejects any theory which would relate the self to the absolute as part is related to the whole. Such a notion implies the idea of substance, an idea that is inapplicable to the infinite being. We have already quoted Bowne as saying that

It is Bowne's point that "as an agent, it is a unit, and not

> when we speak of the infinite as substance, the misleading analogies of sense, experience at once present it as admitting of division, aggregation, etc.; but when we think of it as an agent, these fancies disappear of themselves.[212]

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211 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed", p 96
212 *Ibid*, p 96

a sum or an aggregate."[213] To this extent both our thinkers are largely in agreement. Yet whatever sense is assigned to 'part', it is impossible to suppose on Bowne's view that the self is a part of the absolute. In Bowne, there is a chasm between finitude and infinitude, while in Rāmānuja the two, however obscurely, are brought together.

Both thinkers emphasize the ethical significance of the self. For one as for the other action, motive and personality imply each other in any moral situation. Both agree that there is an ideal of right and wrong, so that the ethical activity of the self may be judged as moral or immoral according to the degree in which it realizes this ideal. In the physical order of activity the moral ideal for Rāmānuja is determined by the law of *Karma* or the previously acquired character of the self. But the individual is capable in his moral strivings of transcending the law of *Karma*. For the self is free and by the exercise of this freedom can act in accord with the will of the absolute self

To Rāmānuja as to Bowne the self is a knowing subject. Thus the former writes that that "which consists of understanding is the individual soul" and further that "the essential nature of the knowing subject is suitably called 'knowledge', and this term is transferred to the knowing subject itself, which is defined as possessing that nature."[214] In other words, knowledge is an attribute, an activity of the knowing self. Emphasizing the place of the universal in knowledge, Bowne makes much the same point.

> In the field of simple sensation, he writes, recurrence is impossible for a merely registering intellect —it is possible only for a universalizing intellect ; that is, for an intellect for which the simple experiences are not merely particular vanishing events, but also bearers of an abiding rational meaning which is common to all and identical in all.[215]

213. Sri Rāmānuja,, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 213.
214 Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p 41.
215 *Ibid*, p. 44.

For both thinkers, then, it is the nature of the mind to know, and Rāmānuja would undoubtedly go along with Bowne in holding that the mind does not possess reason, but reason possesses the mind.

> Under the guidance of the immanent reason we see the mind lifting itself above the flux of impressions into a rational world which, while potential in it from the beginning, only slowly becomes its conscious possession.[216]

We have mentioned the freedom of the self. Both thinkers believe that they can maintain this freedom at the same time that they both insist that the finite self is dependent upon the absolute self. As one commentator on Rāmānuja has written: "Though the individual soul is an attribute or mode (*prakāra*) of God and forms part of his body, yet it is also a spiritual substance and is absolutely real."[217] In the same vein Bowne writes that "the dependence of the finite spirit, in the sense of its non-self-sufficiency, does not prove its nothingness or unreality."[218] To one thinker as to the other, further, agency helps to explain the self as substance does not. It is agency that accounts for the unity of the self. But whereas for Rāmānuja the individual selves exist eternally as potentially active agents in God, for Bowne they are the creatures of God

THE PROBLEM OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD

To the absolute idealist reality in the last analysis is spirit whose essential self-manifestation is life and mind. In taking this position the absolute idealist is not concerned to deny the physical basis of life. Organic structures are themselves subject to the laws of physics and chemistry. But to admit this is not to make a fetish of matter, motion and its laws or to be under the obligation of applying them beyond their own sphere to the life force itself. For the

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216. Chandradhar Sharma, *Indian Philosophy*, p 502.
217. Borden p Bowne, *Personalism*, pp. 281-282.
218 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 285

latter belongs to a higher level of reality where mechanical laws cease to apply. It is the idealist view, then, that absolute spirit in the course of its self-evolution appears under certain determinate conditions as living centres. Reflexes, instincts, and feelings are the instruments by which consciousness is evoked, and with the appearance of still further determinate conditions, the Self. Absolute spirit in the surge of its self-expression cannot stop short of the self, for nothing but the self can begin at all adequately to embody the creative spiritual force that is at the root of all things.

Just as the logic of the idealist position does not involve the rejection of the material world, so neither does it involve the denial of an evolutionary conception of the universe. The world and everything in it, including life and mind, is the result of the gradual self-manifestation of a single spiritual reality. It is only evolution in the sense of blind mechanical force that the idealist would deny. Such reductionism is at poles apart from the idealists' own principle of explanation, which is that the higher cannot be explained in terms of the lower, the whole by its parts. So physical and chemical conditions are inadequate to the explanation of life and the world. Spirit alone provides such an explanation.

Such in brief is the outlook of the idealist and we shall discover it with variations of detail in both Rāmānuja and Bowne.

RĀMĀNUJA'S THEORY OF THE WORLD

The world, according to Rāmānuja, comes into existence as the result of an activity initiated by the gracious will of Brahman. In the all-comprehensive Brahman, both inanimate matter and the finite spirits once existed in a subtle state or, we may say, as potentialities But the act of will which brought them into existence was also a process of thought, as is indicated by the text which reads, "Brahman swells through brooding, that is, thought," and as a later text puts it, "brooding consists of thought in the

form of an intention."[219] "May I become many" is the sense of this intention, so that "Brahman becomes ready for creation."[220] Thus the creation which Brahman launches is wholly according to his desire, but it is not an arbitrary or irrational desire, but intelligent and rational.[221] The "brooding" mentioned by Rāmānuja signifies knowing, namely, reflection on the character and shape of a world previously created by him and which he is about to reproduce. Having an inward intuition of the characteristics of the former world, Brahma creates the new on the same pattern.[222] Further, Rāmānuja states that it is in this brooding that Brahman recalls the constitution of the earlier creation. He writes: "When the period of a great *pralaya* [aeon] draws towards its close, the divine supreme Person, remembering the constitution of the world previous to the *pralaya*, and forming the volition 'May I become manifold', separates into its constituent elements the whole mass of enjoying souls and objects of enjoyment."[223]

The Status of the World in Relation to Brahman and the Finite Self

In so far as the world, as we know it, comes into existence by the will of Brahman, we may call Rāmānuja's a 'creationist' theory. On the other hand 'creation' takes place not out of nothing but out of pre-existent matter, and it is in this sense that Rāmānuja's theory may be called evolutionary. He writes:

> During a *pralaya* it [matter] unites itself with Brahman and abides in its subtle state, without any distinction of names and forms; it then is called the

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219. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 285.

220. Bharatan Kumarappa, *The Hindu Conception of Deity*, p. 211.

221. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 405 (All references to Sri Bhashyam will be from Thibaut's translation unless otherwise indicated).

222 *Ibid*, pp 333-334

223 *Ibid*, p 368.

> 'Unevolved', and by other similar names. At the time of creation, on the other hand, there reveal themselves in *Prakṛti* goodness and other *gunas*, it divides itself according to names and forms, and then is called the 'evolved', and so on.[224]

And to this Rāmānuja adds: "In its causal condition it is *aja*, i.e. unborn, in its effected condition it is 'caused by light', i.e. Brahman; hence there is no contradiction."[225] What Rāmānuja is presumably saying here is that involved in the world is an act of 'creation' and a process of evolution.

It would appear, therefore, that the one Brahman, considered in relation to the modification without which no world could be effected, is found to disclose a distinction within itself, a distinction, if one likes, between body and soul. Body represents the imperfect, changing element in Brahman, while soul or self represents his essential unchanging nature, ever one and perfect. The change undergone by Brahman in effecting the world is merely a modification, as it were, of his body which passes from a subtle to a gross state. But this leaves the self or the essential nature of Brahman untouched. The modifications in Brahman consequent upon his creation of the world, and reabsorption of it, are not modifications in his spiritual or real nature.

Yet, for Rāmānuja, as his interpreters are agreed, the world is an attribute or mode of Brahman. It will help us here to bear in mind Rāmānuja's insistence that the things of which we know anything in experience are always characterized by differences, that these differences are real and yet held together in the unity of the thing. It is just this unity, discovered in experience itself, that characterizes Brahman in relation to the world and its diversity. The world is different from Brahman and yet is completely dependent upon him. Rāmānuja thus invokes the sub-

224. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 368
225. *Ibid*, p. 456.

stance attribute relation when he speaks of the world as an attribute of Brahman. And he also invokes the causal relationship. As we have seen, that relation for Rāmānuja involves nothing but the causal substance which passes from one state or mode of existence to another. The piece of pottery as effect is nothing but a mode or modification of the clay, the causal substance. What is meant when it is said that an effect is produced by or originated from a cause is that a substance at one moment characterized by a certain attribute, state or mode of existence, assumes another attribute, state or mode of existence, potenially present in it from the beginning. To Rāmānuja:

> A substance enters into different states in succession; what passes away is the substance in its previous states, what originates is the substance in its subsequent states. As thus the substance in all its states has being, there is nothing irrational in the *Satkārya* theory.[226]

This theory is, that the effect is pre-existent in the cause.

But let us look more closely at the sense in which Rāmānuja is using the term attribute. Now he does not mean by attribute, or at least does not limit its sense to what are usually understood as abstract qualities. As one of his commentators points out, "Although 'attribute' is usually understood to refer only to qualities, not to things, things may also be regarded as attributes if they completely depend on something else for their existence."[227] Another commentator has attempted to clarify the position in the following way:

> All things thus are predicative to, or modes of, *Paramapurusa* (Brahman), adjectivated by everything else. All terms are thus connotations of Him by the rule of *Sāmānādhikaranya*, or the rule which expresses the inseparable relation existing between substance

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226 Bharatan Kumarappa, *The Hindu Conception of Deity*, p 236

227. A Govindācharya, *Bhagavadgita Bhashya*, (Madras: The University of Madras Press, 1902), p 236

and attribute, or the invariable co-existence of subject and predicate.[228]

Inseparable from Brahman as his attributes or modes are, they are yet different from Him, so that the vicissitudes they undergo do not affect him. Speaking of this difference Rāmānuja declares that

> . . . wherever we cognize the relation of distinguishing attribute and thing distinguished thereby, the two clearly present themselves to our mind as absolutely different.[229]

And so with regard to the world, whether in its potential state in Brahman or in its effected state, it is distinct from Brahman. "Whether in manifest or unmanifest form, whether in creation or reabsorption, the world is distinct from Brahman, but completely dependent on Him."[230] Accordingly, Brahman "is the one substance, self-dependent and supreme, and all else is but a mode of Him."[231] Seemingly incompatible as this idea of the dependence of the world upon Brahman seems to be with the idea of its independence, Rāmānuja asserts them both and with equal emphasis.

Prakṛti or the Phenomenal World

Prakṛti is the principle of change, productive of the world under the initiative and will of Brahman. The wonderful and manifold effects to which it gives rise are all equally perishable. It is thus inseparable from the world of phenomena, indeed is one with it. And as identical with the changeful and impermanent, it cannot be said to have true being. For the realm of the phenomenal, the sphere of "non-intelligent matter, as entering into various states of non-permanent nature, is called non-being; while souls, the nature of which consists in permanent knowledge are called

228. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, pp. 42-43.
229. Bharatan Kumarappa, *The Hindu Conception of Deity*, p. 238.
230. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
231. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 128.

'being'."[232] To Rāmānuja the notion of being can only be attributed to that which is of uniform nature. Thus he writes:

> . . . we say 'it is' of that thing which is of a permanently uniform nature, not connected with the idea of beginning, middle and end, and which hence never becomes the object of the notion of non-existence; while we say 'it is not' of non-intelligent matter which constantly passes over into different states, each later state being out of connection with the earlier state.[233]

It would appear from this latter remark of Rāmānuja that the phenomenal world represents no true system so that the cnnections between its parts are purely fortuitous. But it is change or perishability that is the chief hall mark of non-being. Yet non-being is not merely nothing, as Rāmānuja goes on to explain.

> The jar (he says) is something perishable, but not a thing devoid of proof or to be sublated by true knowledge. 'Non-being' we may call it, in so far as while it is observed at a certain moment in a certain form, it is at some other moment observed in a different condition. But there is no contradiction between two different conditions of a thing which are perceived at different times; and hence there is no reason to call it something futile (*tukhkha*) or false (*mithyā*).[234]

Prakṛti, then, is not non-being in the sense of non-existence, but rather in the sense of the ever changeful, of a flux of forms. That change lies at the very heart of phenomena is not merely evident from sense observation, according to Rāmānuja. For the world, when it is re-absorbed into the infinite and passes back into its originally subtle state, loses all the qualities which characterize it for the human observer.

The Purpose of the Phenomenal World

As we have seen *Prakṛti* is not merely nothing. It

232 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 128
233 *Ibid*, p 129.
234 *Ibid*, p 299

has its place in the scheme of things. Without it the pleasures and pains meted out to a soul bound to worldly existence would be impossible. Thus *Prakṛti* is spoken of as "the object of fruition,"[235] that is, *Prakṛti* has a teleological aspect. Rāmānuja begins by observing that "the soul abiding in nature experiences the qualities derived from nature, the reason being its connection with the qualities in its births in good and evil wombs."[236] Now as a result of the qualities which *Prakṛti* produces in accordance with the deed of souls, souls are bound still further to action and hence to worldly existence. Concerning this Rāmānuja goes on to say:

> This soul, born in a series of retrospective births among *devas*, man, etc.—all variations of matter—forms —delights in *guṇa*-seated pleasures, etc., varying in their *Sāttvika* and other characteristics according to the incidents of such births; and in so doing launches into activities good or evil, in order to procure for itself such pleasures. In order then to reap the fruits of such good or evil acts, it is inevitably born again in good or evil wombs. Born, he acts again, acting he is born again.[237]

The idea here seems to be that *Prakṛti* is a kind of principle of justice, assigning to souls their deserts in terms of pleasure and pain, though in so doing it also binds souls more than ever to the world of phenomenal existence.

How, we may ask, does the finite soul become attached to matter in the first place, that matter which, if it is independent of Brahman, is also under Brahman's control? Rāmānuja meets this question with the theory of *Karma*, the propensity of souls to attach themselves to particular bodies in accord with the characteristics the souls have achieved in previous stages of existence. And this propensity has developed through so many series of evolutions as to be beginningless. "The Jīvas (selves) and their

235. A Govindācharya, *Bhagavadgita Bhashyam*, p 431.
236. *Ibid*, p. 431.
237. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 497.

Karmas," says Rāmānuja, "have had no beginning."[238] In the theory of *Karma*, "he who performs good works becomes good, he who performs bad works becomes bad."[239] Further,

> The being to be embodied (the finite self) requires nothing but an operative cause; it is its own potentiality (Karman) which leads its being into that condition of being (which it is to occupy in the new creation). Potentiality here means Karman.[240]

As operative cause *Prakṛti* is essential to the moral unfolding of the life of the individual. The world is a proving ground, the means by which the individual souls work out their moral destinies. But it is not only a means to this end, but also a means to final release from material bondage itself, as Ramanuja asserts in the following passage.

> *Prakṛti* is a non-intelligent principle, the causal substance of the entire material Universe and constituting the means for the experience of pleasure and pain, and for the final release of all intelligent souls, which are connected with it, from all eternity.[241]

BOWNE'S THEORY OF THE WORLD

The world for Bowne, exists both as a conception as well as mental activity of God and he refrains from saying that it is created as the individual selves are created. At the same time he is opposed to any theory which savours of what he calls pantheism, or evolution, or emanation. Creation is an expression of divine causal agency. We have seen that there is a sense in which Rāmānuja holds to a theory creation, but it is not a sense which would be acceptable to Bowne, assuming that he would regard it as a theory of creation at all. Again Rāmānuja's theory of knowledge and metaphysics assign some degree of ontological status to the material world, since the latter arises out of a pre-

238. *Ibid*, p. 478.
239. *Ibid.*, p. 478.
240. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 370.
241. Borden P. Bowne, *Personalism*, p. 112.

existent matter comprised within Brahman, and the law and plan of which issues from the thought and will of Brahman. To Bowne, on the other hand, the material world is purely *phenomenal*, providing simply the "forms and factors of our common experience."[242] Further Bowne points out that, "the world is not merely an idea; it is also an act. It exists not only as a conception in the divine understanding, but also as a form of activity in the divine will."[243]

The Phenomenal World

For spontaneous thought, as Bowne calls it, sense objects may seem to be substantial things in space and time, yet the fact is that for serious reflection they exist only through divine intelligence. In Bowne's own words:

> For spontaneous thought all sense objects exist as they seem, veritable substantial things in space and time. Later reflection, however, turns them into phenomena, *that is things which exist only for and through intelligence.*[244]

Not that sense objects are illusions for Bowne, but they have no substantial and independent existence. Their reality such as it is, consists, as we have already quoted Bowne as saying, in their being "forms and factors of our common experience."[245] The phenomenal character of space and time follows as a matter of course. Apart from the synthetic and unifying activity of human intelligence time and space are nothing. For example, we do not grasp a piece of music by chasing the mutually external sound waves. Unless the various sounds which are successive and coexistent are comprehended *in a consciousness which unifies* them, there can be no such thing as a symphony. If there were not something abiding and non-successive, something that gives unity and permanence to the endless flow of

242. Borden P. Bowne, *Theory of Thought and Knowledge*, p. 342.
243. Borden P. Bowne, *Personalism*, p. 111.
244. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
245. *Ibid*, p. 118.

change characteristic of the phenomenal world, knowledge of that world would be impossible

All this is to remind the reader of an argument expounded in another section of this essay The aim of that argument is to show that the existence of the phenomenal world is only through divine intelligence Bowne returns to the attack again and again "The flowing world of change," he says, "exists for us only through a system of changeless ideas, and these are impossible and meaningless apart from intelligence"[246] Again if things themselves are really processes in space and time, they become articulate for us only through the ideas by which we fix the processes into a meaning And unless the things themselves are expressions of these ideas, we could not be able to grasp them[247] Yet again, divine "intelligence appears as the supreme condition of the existence of those things which seem to us independent of all intelligence"[248] Further still, these ideas, Bowne holds, are independent of us, so he feels justified in concluding that there must be a supreme intelligence whose ideas the things express Thus he writes:

> It would be incredible that we should know things by ideas essentially unrelated to them, and as the ideas by which the things are constituted are independent of us, there must be a supreme intelligence behind the things which makes them the bearer of or expression of the ideas[249]

Hence to Bowne the phenomenal world is a function or a result of the activity of a supreme mind, which is God But how is the creation of the phenomenal world possible? We deal with Bowne's answer to this question in the following section

God and the World

Is the phenomenal world a part of God or a mode of

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246 Borden P Bowne, *Personalism* p 118
247 *Ibid*, p 118
248 *Ibid*, p 118
249 Borden P Bowne, *Philosophy of Theism* p 174

God, or is it a phase of God's intelligence or mind? Bowne considers these views one after the other only to discard them in favour of unmitigated creation.[250] But he is not unaware of the difficulties of a creationist position. He writes:

> Creation means to posit something in existence which before was not. Concerning it two consistent questions are possible: (1) Who is the agent? (2) How is it possible?[251]

With regard to the first question his answer is that God is the creator of the world. But as for the second question his answer is in effect that there is no answer, at least no rational answer. Now, given his criticism of other theories, it would seem that the only alternative open to Bowne is creation *ex nihilo*. Yet he rejects this view, too, and on what appears to be purely verbal grounds. For he argues that creation *ex nihilo* itself assumes a pre-existent stuff, only that this pre-existent stuff happens to be 'nothing', which is absurd. Nothing can never produce anything. According to him, it is no part of the theistic thesis that

> God took a mass of nothing and made something out of it, but rather that he caused a new existence to begin, and, that, too, in such a way that He was no less after creation than before.[252]

Whatever the merits of Bowne's view here, it has a history in medieval philosophy, and is not an idle invention of his own. In any case, "creation is a mystery",[253] but Bowne taken not to apply to the divine willing the limitations of thought itself."[254] For "creation is the only conception that reconciles the unity of God with the existence of the finite."[255]

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250 Borden P. Bowne, *Philosophy of Theism*, p. 178.
251 *Ibid.*, p. 179.
252 *Ibid.*, p. 180.
253 *Ibid.*, p. 180.
254 *Ibid.*, p. 180.
255 *Ibid.*, p. 186.

In holding that the world depends upon the will of God, Bowne explains that "in estimating this result, care must be taken not to apply to the divine willing he limitations of the human."[256] Further, if God's will is temporal in relation to the world, it is eternal with reference to himself.

> Willing does not necessarily imply beginning.... God's will in reference to himself must be eternal, that is, it is as unbegun as God, being but that free self-determination whereby God is God.[257]

Since the world has a beginning in time, God's will may be viewed under the aspect of time, but in its real nature as eternal it is of course not bound by time.

What more precisely is the relation of the world to God? The relation is above all the conformity of the world to the dictates of God's will, for the world is the form in which the divine purpose expresses itself. Bowne writes:

> We hold that the world is no self-centred reality, independent of God, but is simply the form in which divine purpose realizes itself. It has no laws of its own which oppose a bar to the divine purpose, but all its laws and ongoings are but the expression of that purpose In our dealing with nature we have to accommodate ourselves to its laws, but with God the purpose is original, the laws are its consequence. Hence the system of law itself is absolutely sensitive to the divine purpose, so that what that pupose demands finds immediate expression and realization, not in spite of the system, but in and through the system.[258]

All of this is to say that God is related to the world as its creator and purposer. If the world were merely the physical system, the term creation would adequately describe its relation to God, but since the world is more than a physical system, God is not merely its creator but purposer as well God is also the ruler of the world. But God as a ruler is significant due to the existence of selves

256 Borden P Bowne, *The Philosophy of Theism*, p. 201.
257 *Ibid*, p 201
258. *Ibid*, p 203

which, though they have a "relative independence,"[259] are nevertheless under the guidance of God. In fact the idea of God as a ruler or governor can only be applied when the governed have a certain *measure of freedom.*

> We can speak of government, says Bowne, only where there are beings which by a certain independence threaten to withdraw themselves from the general plan which the ruler aims to realize.[260]

Teleology in Nature

To Bowne nature is no mere blind force, but the expression and realization of a thought or plan. Nor is the *continuity of nature merely mechanical, it is intellectual.* All the laws and phenomena of nature, its constants and variables, become intelligible only in terms of a divine plan.[261] And this plan is nothing less than the realization of a supreme good, as is implied in the existence of free spirits and the notion of a divine government. For the notion of a divine government would make no sense unless a supreme good existed and were capable of realization. As Bowne puts it, the notion is one that acquires "rational meaning only as some supreme good exists which is to be the outcome of creation, and which, therefore, gives the law for all personal activity."[262] Above all, then, the plan of nature is a moral plan—the furtherance of the moral personality. "A community of moral persons, obeying moral law and enjoying moral blessedness, is the only end which could excuse creation or make it worthwhile."[263]

SUMMARY AND COMPARISON

In the view of both our thinkers the world comes into existence as a result of the rational activity of the infinite The world arises out of the thought of Brahman,[264] says

259. Borden P. Bowne, *The Philosophy of Theism*, p 231.
260. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p. 285.
261. Borden P. Bowne, *Philosophy of Theism*, p. 203
262. *Ibid*, p. 204.
263. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 265.
264. Borden P. Bowne, *Personalism*, p. 118.

Rāmānuja, while for Bowne "intelligence appears as the supreme condition of the existence of those things which seem to be independent of all intelligence"[265] Further, according to both thinkers, the creation exhibits a pattern, with this difference, that Rāmānuja holds that "Brahman, having an inward intuition of the characteristics of the former world, creates the new world on the same pattern"[266] This idea of a previous creation is not to be found in Bowne. Again, in Rāmānuja the phenomenal world stems from the activity of a pre-existent subtle matter which forms the body of Brahman Bowne, on the contrary, subscribes to an out-right theory of creation, though rejecting, it is true, creation *ex nihilo*. Finally, both Rāmānuja and Bowne emphasize the purposive character of the world To Rāmānuja the world is a moral proving ground and a means for meting out to the individual his moral deserts It is through the world that the selves achieve purification and ultimately release from continual birth and rebirth Bowne posits a supreme good in accordance with which God has fashioned the world and for the sake of the attainment of which in individual selves and the world exists

THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM

The problem of the nature of mind and body and the relation between the two is as familiar as it is complex Nothing comes more intimately and constantly within the purview of our experience than our minds and bodies, for it is these two fundamental entities that are involved in all life's transactions Psychology, biology, and physics, all have something to say about the problem, but here we are concerned with its metaphysical aspect Still more especially we are concerned with the general idealistic solution of the problem, purposing thereby to introduce the theories of Ramānuja and Bowne

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265 Sri Ramānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 405
266 *Ibid*, p 424

Generally, absolute idealism takes the view that mind or spirit is the fundamental principle of reality, differentiating itself into the world of things, animate and inanimate, in the course of its development of self-expression. To the absolute idealist minds and objects are not two essentially different realities, but one reality with mind foremost. Such a theory with variations is to be found in Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Bradley, Bosanquet and Royce. All these thinkers agree in holding that consciousness, whether in the form of Mind, Spirit, Will, Experience or Self, is the final reality. Further, man bears an especially close relation to the spiritual principle that underlies all things and thus shares in its qualities, though on a finite scale. Hence the self in idealism occupies a central role, all other realities being xpressions or forms of the self. Now idealism is divided with regard to the monistic or pluralistic character of the spiritual principle which it agrees in holding is ultimate. The absolute idealist stresses its oneness, while pluralistic idealists, like Leibniz and Mc-Taggart, and we may add Rāmānuja and Bowne, are more interested in stressing its diversity and in showing that reality is not one self or mind, but a system of selves or minds. Finally there are panpsychistic idealists, thinkers like Ward, Strong and Paulsen, who argue that bodies and brains are evolved by minds as the fit apparatus for their action and expression.

THE RELATION OF MIND AND BODY IN RĀMĀNUJA

We have already seen that for Rāmānuja human minds and bodies are both finite parts of the infinite body of Brahman. And it will be recalled too that these minds and bodies exist eternally as potentialities in God. Matter in contrast to mind is non-sentient and undergoes modification in accordance with the will and desires of the self. The body is always under the control of the self,[267] being an instrument which the self uses for its own purposes.

267. Satischandra Chatterjee, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, pp. 431-432.

Rāmānuja's theory is best described as some form of interactionism. As to the question how the mind comes to be associated with a body, there is no real answer in Rāmānuja, though how it comes to be associated with a particular type of body is explained by the self's previous stages of existence, in other words, by *Karma*.[268]

There is no place for disembodied spirit in the philosophy of Rāmānuja. Even Brahman does not exist as pure spirit. Yet this does not mean that mind and body are on an equal footing, that the interaction between them is equal. In the case of Brahman, spirit is supreme, completely unaffected by body. But finite spirit is affected by the body, yet only in accordance with the spirit's own inclinations and actions. As we have already quoted Rāmānuja as saying, though in another context:

> As Brahman has all sentient and non-sentient things for its body and constitutes the *Self* of that body, there is nothing contrary to reason in Brahman being connected with two states, a causal and an effected one, the essential characteristics of which are expansion on the one hand and contraction on the other; for this expansion and contraction belong (not to Brahman itself, but) to the sentient and non-sentient beings. The imperfections adhering to the body do not affect Brahman, and the good qualities belonging to the *Self* do not extend to the body; in the same way as youth, childhood and old age which are attributes of embodied beings such as gods or men, belong to the body only, not to the embodied *Self*; while knowledge, pleasure and so on belong to the conscious *Self* only, not to the body.[269]

All this holds for the absolute self, which, so to speak, is immune to its body

The case is different with the finite self. The finite self falsely identifies itself with the body and is therefore subject to bodily influences. "Owing to the false identifica-

268 Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 422
269 P N Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita*, p 283

tion of the self with the body," says Rāmānuja, "it is called the empirical self (*dehi*)—and its life is influenced by the three *guṇas* of *Prakṛti*, namely *sattva* (balance), *raja* (activity), and *tamas* (inertia)."[270] Such mistaken identification betrays the self into subservience to the body. Different from the body, the self yet comes under the influence of the changes that take place in the body. If there is an answer to the question why the self becomes associated with a body at all, it lies in the pervasiveness of the self. In any case, Rāmānuja insists that mind and body are always found together. At the same time the self is always conscious of holding the body in a dependent position. But this power of the self is confined to its own body. It is not all-pervading. Of course, the self does not vary in size as the body varies in size, but pervades through power, just as rays of light pervade a room, though their source is limited to one place. All this is another way of saying that the individual selves are finite, their actions limited to their bodies. This finitude, moreover, follows from the fact that each individual self has a characteristic locus or perspective in the life of the Divine.[271]

Given this view of the mind-body relation, can it be said that the finite selves possess ultimate reality? Are they fragments of the absolute self? or are they unique, and if unique, how do they appear as bodies in relation to Brahman? We shall deal with these questions in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

THE MIND-BODY PROBLEMS IN BOWNE

It is in relation to the self as a thing that acts and is acted upon that Bowne considers the mind-body problem. The self, he observes "abides, acts, and is acted upon; and these are the essential marks of ontological reality."[272] Of the two members of the mind-body relation, it is the

270. K. C. Varadachari, *Sri Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 135.

271. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p. 349.

272. *Ibid.*, p 349.

mind that possesses the greater reality, and this becau
its permanence in contrast to the mutability of the l
"In comparison with the body, the soul is the more
of the two; for the former is in perpetual flux."[273] Bu
question remains: what is the relation between the t
That a relation exists is evident from the fact that
mind and body "begin together, advance together, c
together, and so far as our observation goes, they p
together."[274] It would seem that "during life the mi
most rigorously conditioned by the body; and we r
find it apart from the body."[275]

May we say, then, that mind and body are intera
entities? Bowne takes up the various forms of the i
actionist hypothesis only to discard them all in the
There is interaction, he says, in the inductive sense a
this sense it means simply the laws of mutual chan
of concomitant variation among things. The problem
discover the law of these changes, to that the task o
psychologist is to find out what mental changes go
what physical states and what physical changes go
what mental states.[276] Assume that the body is sub
tially real, or an aggregate of substantial realities, a
may from a common-sense point of view, interaction v
only mean that body and soul affect each other, indeed
union of the two has no other meaning than this fa
mutual influence."[277] On the phenomenal level su
theory is acceptable enough, as for example, the t
which locates the soul within the physical aggregate c
the body. It regards the soul "either as a manikin lo
within the brain and nervous system, or as a pervasiv
all embracing aura."[278] Such a theory will not do.
manikin soul is absurd; and the laws of continuity an

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273 Borden P Bowne, *Studies in Theology*, p 375
274 *Ibid*, p 376
275 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed", p. 35
276 *Ibid*, p 351
277. *Ibid*, p 285
278 *Ibid*, p 353

conservation of energy are affronted by such a procedure."[279] No more satisfactory is the notion that interaction must be by impact.[280] The upshot of Bowne's discussion is that the popular views of the mind-body relation provide no satisfactory solution of the problem.

Yet the view that he proposes on his own account is itself a form of interactionism. According to this view the soul is posited by the infinite, while the body is simply an order or system of phenomena connected with the soul which reproduces to some extent the general features of the phenomenal order, at the same time that the latter expresses an order of concomitance with the mental life. Thus the phenomenal becomes a visible expression of the personality, a means of personal communion and also a means of controlling to some extent the inner life. Bowne writes:

> The concomitance is the only interaction there is; and its determining ground must be sought in the plan and agency of the infinite. Only in this sense of physical concomitance is it possible to speak of a physical basis of thought, or of a physical foundation of mental activity. And only in the same sense of concomitance is it allowed to speak of the soul as building and maintaining the organism. Each is adjusted to the other in accordance with the plan of the whole; but so far as the two factors are concerned, the connection is logical, not dynamic; and any dynamic relation which we may affirm must be seen to be only a form of speech.[281]

It is not easy to see what this distinction between logical and dynamic as applied to the relation of mind and body amounts to, except that the relation is not a real one, but part of a scheme in which the individual mind is alone real and the body is phenomenal. At any rate, the doctrine is a subtle one; it is not easy to see its exact bearings. Some scholars have interpreted it as a form of occasionalism[282]

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279. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed.", p. 353
280. *Ibid*, p 353
281. *Ibid*, p. 368-69.
282 Albert C. Knudson, *The Philosophy of Personalism*, (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1927), p. 77.

We cannot understand life, Bowne believes, unless we know the laws under which the physical basis of life operates, but we must also assume that the infinite is the ever-present source of all things. "With this understanding we may carry on the study of the physical basis of life and mind without the least fear of seeing them vanish into mechanical by-products."[283] As we have said, mind is the reality in the mind-body relation. "And seeing," says Bowne, "that the soul is that with reference to which the organism has its existence, we may also speak of the soul as the builder and maintainer of the organism."[284] The fact is, according to Bowne, "that there is no reason to think that there would be any organism if there were no inner life."[285]

In Bowne's view, then, no necessary connection exists between mind and body. The relation between them is contingent and fortuitous. Mind without body is perfectly conceivable.

> We do not see that the body is necessary to consciousness, but that abnormal physical conditions may derange or hinder the development of consciousness. On the most realistic view of the body, it might conceivably be altogether, other than it is, and the mental life might go on just the same......The relation, whatever it is, can only be viewed as factual and contingent. The actual body, then, is no analytically necessary factor of our inner life.[286]

Nothing obliges us to believe that the fortunes of the mind are tied up with those of the body.

> The decay and failure of the body do not analytically imply the destruction of the soul, as would be the case if the body were its causal ground. The soul, when the body fails, has not to go wandering through space to find another home; it is continuously comprised in the thought and activity of the infinite. God gave it life, and if He wills He will maintain it.[287]

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283 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed.", p. 369.
284 *Ibid*, p 369
285 *Ibid*, p 369
286 *Ibid*, p 378
287 *Ibid*, p 379

SUMMARY AND COMPARISON

nānuja *and Bowne, each in his own way, subscribe* nteractionist theory of the relation between mind ly. Both assert the primacy of mind in this rela-, but in this subordinating matter to mind, how-owne's view is considered by some scholars as inter-m and by others as occasionalism. But the status l to matter in relation to mind differs in the two s. Rāmānuja appears to assign a causal efficacy to y which Bowne expressly denies. The result is that eractionism of Rāmānuja *is of a more straightfor-*rt than Bowne's and leaves no room for the exist-f disembodied souls. Bowne, it will be recalled, "We do not see that a body is necessary for con-ess."[288] This is in keeping with his view that the . between mind and body is one mediated by God, accordance with a plan. Body and mind are related, causally. It is a question whether such a theory called interactionism at all, yet the name is per-e, *provided it is borne in mind that it is not a causal* ionism. In locating matter, though in a highly orm, in Brahman from the beginning, Rāmānuja can adily account for the association of matter and mind possible on Bowne's theory.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

e *metaphysician has as much difficulty with the pro-*f evil as has the moralist, indeed greater difficulty, s his province to give the ultimate answers to such ns as what is evil, its origin, its effects upon man, verse and God. It is not surprising that there are erally agreed upon answers to these questions.

w is evil to be reconciled with the wisdom and bene- of God? How account for death and disease, and flood, earthquake and holocaust, to say nothing l *evil and sin. Could a beneficent deity allow such*

things? The traditional answer is that man as endowed by his creator with free will can and indeed, must choose between good and evil and is responsible for his choices. This life is a probationary period and the world a moral school. Hence evil, ignorance and benevolence are no part of the deity or even of the nature of things. Evil, whether physical or moral, is the punishment meted out to man for the misuse of his freedom. Another answer, still traditional but far more sophisticated, is that given by Leibniz. To him this is the best of all possible worlds, his argument being that the compossible system of monads which are actualized by the divine will contains the greatest excess of good over evil. God might have created a world with no evil in it, but such a world would not have been as good as the actual world. Thus the presence of evil in the world is no argument against the goodness of God. A more radical solution of the problem of evil, and one with a long history, is that which relegates evil to the realm of appearances. So Hegel argues that the world is through and through rational, that the rational and the real are one, and hence that evil, since it is irrational, cannot be real. But not all idealists have resorted to this heroic solution. Lotze has no desire to deny the fact of evil, nor look upon it as a disguised good. But as the ways of God are inscrutable to human reason, the existence of evil need not be interpreted as derogatory to divine wisdom, goodness and power.

In our own times the theological and idealistic solutions of the problem of evil have been largely abandoned in favour of a naturalistic, evolutionary approach. Evil is seen as the inevitable accompaniment of the process of human adjustment to nature and to society. Metaphysically the implications of such a view all point to a universe which in itself is indifferent to moral values. If then good is not something embedded in the cosmos, it is a creation by man, a creation that is never finished and always changing. And in the same way the existence of evil poses not only a metaphysical but also a practical problem. And its solution calls for application of the scientific intelligence. Such a point

of view is far removed from that of Rāmānuja and Bowne whose kinship, whatever the difference between them, is with the idealists.

THE THEORY OF EVIL IN RĀMĀNUJA

Concerning evil Rāmānuja lays down two propositions which seem to be irreconcilable. On the one hand there is his belief that the evils confronting us in life are ascribable to the possession by the self of freedom. On the other hand, there is his belief that the self is bound by the law of *Karma*, that is, the previously acquired character of the self.[289] How then, as Rāmānuja holds, can the self be held responsible for its actions? The self cannot exceed the scope of the law of *Karma* and this law itself is set by God.[290] Evil exists. Rāmānuja never glosses over this fact. And he is equally convinced that evil ought not to exist, as he is convinced also that it may be overcome. No question then, that his followers were so convinced. Hence if evil can be overcome by active endeavour, it must at some point come under the control of the individual self. We come thus to Rāmānuja's view of the origin and seat of evil.

Origin of Evil

From where does evil stem? Now, so far as natural evil is concerned, that is, evil that is not the result of human choices, Rāmānuja's answer is plain. Such evil stems from the irrational activity of *Prakṛti* or matter. *Prakṛti* is the principle of motion and it is a non-intelligent principle. Unlike Brahman whose personality is unaffected by the modifications of his body, the finite selves are affected by their bodies, though Rāmānuja, as we have seen earlier, maintains at the same time that in their essence they are independent of them. Less plain is Rāmānuja's answer to the question of moral evil. In this connection he once more emphasizes the role of *Prakṛti* or the material world. That

289. P. N. Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita*, p. 152.

290. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, p. 694.

role is of the first importance in the growth and development of the individual selves. But here the argument takes an interesting turn. If the individual selves are to exercise their freedom, they can only do so in the setting of a material world. Indeed this appears to be the purpose of creation. And given this freedom wrong choices are inevitable, choices whose evil consequences can only be corrected by repeated good choices, and such repetition necessitates a succession of worlds through the aeons. It will be observed, therefore, that *Prakṛti* does not play the same role in moral as it plays in natural evil. For the locus of evil is not really *Prakṛti*, but is bound up with the free choices of individual selves.[291]

Ignorance and the Way of Release

Except for the details of its metaphysical frame work, the ethics of Rāmānuja differs in no fundamental respect from that of the *Bhagavadgita.* The root of all evil is nescience and nescience consists in mistaking the soul for the body. Thus Kumarappa writes: "Since the root of all evil is nescience, whereby the soul identifies itself with the body and gives itself to the pursuit of bodily ends, it is necessary for it to see that its own true nature is quite distinct from that of the body.[292] Addressing himself to the question, how do we know that this identification of the self with the body is false, Rāmānuja declares that "Brahman is that which witnesses (is conscious of) *Nescience,* and the essence of a witnessing consciousness consists in being pure light (intelligence), and the essence of pure light or intelligence is that, distinguishing itself from the non-intelligent, it renders itself, as well as what is different from it, capable of becoming the object of empiric thought and speech (Vyavahāra)."[293] Rāmānuja goes on to say that "all this implies the presence of difference—if there were

291. Srı Rāmānuja, *Srı Bhashyam,* p 128
292. Bharatan Kumarappa, *The Hındu Conception of Deity,* (London · Luzac & Co, 1934), p. 285.
293 Srı Rāmānuja, *Srı Bhashyam,* p. 161.

no difference, light or intelligence, could not be what it is, it would be *something altogether void, without any* meaning."[294] What Rāmānuja is saying here is that Brahman, or consciousness generally, must have an object from which it distinguishes itself, and *in so doing reveals both the* nature of itself and of the object which is opposed to it. Hence the mistaken identification of soul and body would itself be *impossible unless the one were different from the* other.

Until the self achieves the knowledge that it is distinct and different from the body and adheres to the way of life *implied in such knowledge, release from the yoke of Karma* is impossible. And this insight and practice must be coupled with the realization that the Absolute Self is the inner ruler of all selves at the same time that He is different from all of them. The way of enlightenment is the religious way, that of mediating upon the infinite self, doing good works and worshiping Brahman. "He from whom all beings proceed and by whom all this is pervaded —worshiping Him with the proper works man attains to perfection."[295] And Rāmānuja says further, "what we have to understand by knowledge in this connection has been *repeatedly explained, viz. a mental energy different in* character from the mere cognition of the sense of texts, and more specifically denoted by such terms as *dhyāna* or Upāsana, i.e., meditation ; which is of the nature of remembrance *(i.e. representative thought)*, but *in intuitive clearness* is not inferior to the clearest presentative thought (*Pratyakṣa*) ; which by constant daily practice becomes ever more perfect, and being duly continued up to death secures final Release."[296]

The knowledge which Rāmānuja is here recommending has little to do with logic and nothing at all with the study of texts. It arises from the depth of an experience and

294. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 161.
295. *Ibid*, p. 700.
296. *Ibid*, p. 699.

goes beyond words and concepts Life, which is dissociable from religion, is deeper than logic We find Bowne saying the same thing Religious thinkers have reiterated it through the ages

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IN BOWNE

Bowne approaches the problem from the philosophical as well as the religious points of view In keeping with his general methodology his starting point is inductive and proceeds through inference He points out that much of the discussion of the problem of evil is vitiated by theoretical and abstract considerations Evil is not to be explained away by the niceties of logic or the sophistications of a speculative metaphysics It is a problem that goes to the heart of things, and this for Bowne means the heart of religion For how can an omnipotent, omniscient and all merciful God permit the existence of evil in the world? Bowne has no clear solution of the problem, especially as he is unwilling either to deny the perfection of God or the real existence of evil

The Question of Freedom

The question of freedom, in Bowne's view, concerns not only our executive activities in the outer world, but also our inner rational activity[297] Indeed the clearest illustration of freedom is to be found in the passionless operations of thought itself

> If, then we are looking, says Bowne, for the most important field of freedom we should certainly find it in the moral realm, but if we are seeking the purest illustration of freedom we should find it in the operations of pure thought[298]

Freedom of thought means that thought is a self-directing activity which proceeds according to laws inherent in itself and ideals generated by itself Bowne is concerned here to combat any system of necessity which would turn thought

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297 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed ', p 407
298 *Ibid*, p 408

into a mere shadow of things as they are, just as it would render the moral life meaningless. And Bowne feels that if it can be shown, as he thinks he has shown, that thought is free, that freedom, as he puts it, is implicit in the structure of thought itself, it has thereby been shown that freedom is of the very essence of selfhood and evil. For thought involves choice and if choice is free in the intellectual realm, it is equally free in the moral realm. Indeed it is the same will that evinces itself in both our intellectual and moral activities.[299] It is not impossible, therefore, that the selves do make wrong choices and wrong judgments resulting in evil.

Natural Evil

The moral life without freedom is meaningless and with freedom evil, the result of wrong choices, is at least intelligible. But what about natural evil, the evil that lurks in the scheme of things? How is it to be explained? Bowne is opposed to all efforts to explain it away. Theologians and others who affirm that life is good fall back upon faith in God and his long term plan for human beings when confronted with such happenings as death, disease, pain and suffering. To Bowne such a solution of the problem has a merely abstract validity and is of little practical significance. However, he does not say that a theory like Leibniz's is entirely without plausibility.

> A government by general laws necessarily implies individual hardship; yet the system is not only good on the whole, it is also the best possible. The eternal truths of reason and the inevitable might of logical sequence forbid the system being other than it is.[300]

As thus described by Bowne Leibniz's view is not to be lightly dismissed. But Bowne finds he cannot accept it, for if this is the best of all possible worlds, then any attempt to change it must only result in a change for the worse.

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299. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "revised ed.", pp. 407-12.
300. Borden P. Bowne, *Theism*, pp. 264-65.

This is an intolerable corollary to Bowne. Further, the theory places the responsibility upon God for all the evils in the world. It is hard to believe, for example, that the non-existence of pain in its present degree, or even its utter absence, involves a contradiction or runs counter to some eternal truth.[301] At any rate, it is a proposition that is in need of proof. Continuing his argument against Leibniz, Bowne writes:

> So far as rational necessity, the only necessity of which we know anything, goes, the whole order of the world, for good or evil, is purely contingent. Whatever good purposes toothache and neuralgia and pestilence and fang and venom and parasites may serve, there is no proof that any eternal truth is to blame, for their presence, or would be damaged by their absence. These facts have all the marks of contingency, not of necessity.[302]

Evil is thus a brute fact and cannot be conjured away by a theory. If Bowne is opposed to the Leibnitzian optimism, he is no less opposed to the attempt to paint the picture all gloomy. The fact is that the picture is not all black, for good is as undeniable a factor in our experience as is evil. Again, the trouble here is abstractionism. Pain isolated from all else is an abstraction and belongs only to abstract man. But "abstract man cannot be miserable, but only concrete conscious man."[303] Finally, Bowne dismisses the argument, advanced from the standpoint of an evolutionary theodicy. That the universe is in its raw beginnings and the good is yet to come. The evolution here posited is a mechanical process and any veering toward the good is a chance departure But in a mechanical system chance departures are strictly impossible.[304]

The Theistic Solution of the Problem

A great deal of evil, Bowne says, is man-made, and is

301. Borden P Bowne, *The Philosophy of Theism*, p. 265.
302 *Ibid.*, p. 265.
303. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
304. *Ibid*, p. 270.

attributable to our ignorance of the universe in which we live. Yet evil is not pure loss. It has contributed to man's development, moulding his character and refining his sense of values. "Only in life are life's values revealed; and only in life can they be tested."[305] And it is fair to say that the "highest manifestations of character spring mainly from the soil of sorrow."[306] Even death has helped to draw men closer together and to understand each other. Pain and suffering have helped to a richer manifestation of man's highest qualities.

In the last analysis, however, we must fall back upon God for a solution of our problem. Illustrating this Bowne writes:

> The net result of human experience is faith in the goodness of God. The problem is not abstract and academic but concrete and historical. This faith, with all that it implies, will remain until human nature changes, or experience enters into a contradictory phase. The facts logically and abstractly considered, neither compel nor forbid this faith. They permit it, and to some extent illustrate it; and the mind with that faith in the perfect which underlies all its operations refuses to stop short of the highest.[307]

The God to whom Bowne is here appealing is a moral being, not a metaphysical abstraction. He is a God of experience. At times Bowne verges on the view that God himself is not perfect and needs man to round out his moral nature. Finite existence is the means by which God comes into full possession of himself

We say there is a suggestion of this view in Bowne, but on the whole his is the traditional orthodox conception of God. And in terms of it he struggles sincerely with the problem of evil. He would be the first to admit that no final solution is possible, certainly no theoretical solution. As he says, "speculation can only call attention to difficul-

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305. Borden P. Bowne, *Theism*, p 280
306. *Ibid.*, p. 278.
307. *Ibid*, p. 286

ties and suggest possibilities without being able to say anything positive "[308]

COMPARISON AND SUMMARY

The philosophical idealist, if we may venture to generalize, tends to gloss over the problem of evil But this is not true of either Râmânuja or Bowne Both grapple with the problem with the utmost honesty, and they are under no illusions that they have succeeded in solving it To a greater extent perhaps than Bowne, the Indian thinker writes out of the depths of his personal experience, but Bowne, too, as we have seen, abjures clear cut theories and abstractions The agreement between Râmânuja and Bowne goes farther than this Neither thinker will place the responsibility for evil upon the absolute To Ramānuja it is *Prakrti* or the material principle that is the source of evil, while Bowne ascribes no one source to evil Like Rāmānuja, however, he looks upon the material world as a moral proving ground, as a means to the development of character To both philosophers morality without freedom is a contradiction in terms If it is by the exercise of his free will that man errs, it is by the same exercise that he redeems himself And this redemption for both Rāmānuja and Bowne consists in man's conforming his will to the will of God

THE ULTIMATE PERSON IN THE PHILOSOPHIES OF RĀMĀNUJA AND BOWNE

It is evident to Ramanuja and Bowne that there is an ultimate principle explaining all things and sustaining them They are also agreed on the nature of this principle, it is personal Thus the concept of personality contains the most vital clue to the nature of reality Allowing for all the differences between our two thinkers, we may say that the characterization of Bowne's system as theistic idealistic personalism is one that comes as close as any to characterizing the thought of Ramanuja

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308 Borden P Bowne *Theism*, p 290

The background of Rāmānuja's thought here is largely uncertain, but in the West theistic personalism has its roots mainly in the speculations of five men. On the whole, its spiritual individualism is traceable to Leibniz; its immaterialism to Berkeley; its epistemology and ethics to Kant; its emphasis upon concrete wholeness to Hegel; and its first distinctive formulation to Lotze. Bowne continues the Lotzean strain of thought. His theism is of the traditional sort. It stresses the absoluteness of God; it makes the creation of the world and of the finite selves in it, a free act of God; and this world exists not in God but outside Him. *Above all God is a person, the ultimate Person,* and the reality of which He is the fount consists of a system of active selves.

In this conception of God, as we shall see in what follows, our two thinkers have much in common, though here again the differences between them may not be overlooked.

RĀMĀNUJA'S CONCEPTION OF GOD

To Rāmānuja God or Brahman is the supreme person, himself changeless, though he is the initiator of change. But why is it necessary to conceive of God as a personality at all? Rāmānuja's argument is this. Reality cannot be conceived as a bare identity. Rather it is a determinate whole which maintains its identity in and through difference.[309] Now such a unity in difference is possible only if there exists a comprehensive principle that embraces them both. The best example we have of this variety in unity is consciousness. Accordingly the comprehensive principle, of which we have just spoken, must be spiritual or conscious. If the world is an order, above all an order of selves, it is because of the existence of a supreme self

But Rāmānuja offers another argument of a more practical kind for supposing that the ultimate reality is personal in nature. The religious consciousness can find no

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309. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 458.

substance in a qualityless absolute, without feeling, will, or thought. Such an absolute fails to meet the deepest needs of the self, especially its need for communion or real fellowship with a supreme 'other', which if it is to satisfy this need must itself be a personality.[310] Can the existence of such a personality be proved? Rāmānuja's answer to this question is considered in the next section.

Problems in Connection with the Proof of God's Existence

In his account of the nature of Brahman, Rāmānuja, it is evident, accepts the idealistic view that reality in its ultimate nature is spiritual and personal. Brahman is the immanent principle of order in the universe, an active and pervasive principle. At the same time Brahman is also a transcendent reality embracing all experience. If Brahman is the whole, can the finite self know him? The answer is no. For the finite reason or understanding, while it can infer correctly about 'this' or 'that', "can never infer correctly about the whole."[311] In other words, in Rāmānuja's view, human reason, which is limited and discursive, is debarred from knowing Him who transcends the finite. Accordingly, he rejects those arguments for the existence of God which are based upon reason or finite experience, that is to say, he rejects not only the ontological and cosmological arguments, but the argument from design.[312] All empirical arguments are based on comparison and analogies drawn from an experience that is necessarily fragmentary and therefore inconclusive. Moreover, such arguments, if they prove anything, prove the existence of a substance, not of a personality or spirit. Further still, if they prove the existence of a creator, they do not prove that He is all powerful.[313]

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310 S Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, pp. 682-83.

311. K C Varadachari, *Sri Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge*, p 29.

312. P N Srinivasachari, *The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita*, pp 12-14.

Thus the traditional arguments for the existence of God do not satisfy Ramanuja Of the cosmological argument he complains that while it establishes a first cause, it does not establish the nature of this cause It is a fair presumption that it is intelligent, but still a presumption As for the ontological argument, it suffers from the obvious fallacy that the idea of a perfect being does not warrant the assertion of its existence Further, existence as we know it is always existence in space and time (*desakalakara*), so that inference to a being who transcends space and time is especially invalid [314] The teleological argument suffers from the fact that experience can be appealed to as showing that the world, so far from being all beauty and order, is cruel and irrational The moral argument is in no better case It may be that reason demands the union of duty and happiness and thus permissibly postulates a moral being who unites them [315] But postulate is no proof

But Ramanuja's criticisms are especially directed against those efforts to establish the existence of God by means of empirical evidence For example, there is the contention that just as it is possible to infer from the living body a soul or intelligent principle that animates it so it is possible to infer from non sentient matter an intelligent principle underlying it [316] But the infinite self does not bring into existence the body which it animates, and yet it is just this which we wish to prove with regard to the creator in relation to the world Further, if it is argued that motion in the inanimate world even as motion in the body, requires an animating intelligent principle to explain it, it may be pointed out that there is nothing in the analogy

313 K C Varadachari *Sri Ramanuja s Theory of Knowledge* p 30

314 *Ibid* pp 30 31

315 P N Srinivasachari *The Philosophy of Visiṣṭadvaita* p 13

316 Sri Ramanuja *Sri Bhashyam* p 163

which establishes the existence of only one such principle. For, just as there are many souls animating many bodies, so it may be that the material world is animated by a plurality of intelligent principles.[317]

Again, the argument from the world as an effect, falls short of its goal. For we have no right to infer a supreme creator till it has been shown that lesser beings, of special religious merit, though of finite intelligence, could not have created the world. On this subject Rāmānuja writes:

> As we both [Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja] admit the existence of individual souls, it will be the more economical hypothesis to ascribe to them the agency implied in the construction of the world. Nor must you object to this view on the ground that such agency cannot belong to the individual souls because they do not possess the knowledge of material causes . . . for all intelligent beings are capable of direct knowledge of material cause, such as earth, and so on, and instrumental causes, such as sacrifices and the like, are directly perceived by individual beings at the present time (and were no doubt equally perceived so at a former time when this world had to be planned and constructed). Nor does the fact that intelligent beings are not capable of direct insight into the unseen principle—called "*apūrva*" (a blind principle) or by similar names—which resides in the form of a power in sacrifices and other instrumental causes, in any way preclude their being agents in the construction of the world. Direct insight into powers is nowhere required for undertaking work; what is required for that purpose is only direct presentative knowledge of the things endowed with power, while of power itself it suffices to have some kind of knowledge. Potters apply themselves to the task of making pots and jars on the strength of the direct knowledge they possess of the implements of their work—the wheel, the staff, etc.—without troubling about a similar knowledge of the powers inherent in those implements; and in the same way intelligent beings may apply themselves to their work (to be effected by means of sacrifices, etc.) if only they are assured by sacred tradition of the exist-

317. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 163

ence of the various powers possessed by sacrifices and the like.[318]

We have quoted this passage at length in order to show Rāmānuja's manner of arguing against the all too facile empirical demonstrations of God's existence. The manner may be called dialectical. For example, assume, as in the foregoing passage, that the world is an effect, then it may be the effect of some agency less than divine, even human. On the other hand refuse to make this assumption and the inference to an intelligent creator becomes super-erogatory. The upshot of Rāmānuja's reasoning here is this: "The inference of a creative Lord which claims to be in agreement with observation is refuted by reasoning which itself is in agreement with observation."[319] Whether we proceed on the analogy of a body that presupposes a presiding intelligent principle or on the analogy of a product that presupposes a producing agent, in either case it is impossible empirically to establish the proposition that the world presupposes a supreme being as its creator and animating principle.

Is the existence of God, then, altogether undemonstrable? If empirical reasoning can give us no certain knowledge of God and if the logical intellect is equally powerless, what alternative is left? To Rāmānuja there is an alterna- and it lies in intuitive perception. It alone is capable of assuring us of God's existence In describing intuitive perception Rāmānuja falls back upon scripture Scripture tells us of the experience of others who have had this intuitive knowledge and it is in following directions of scripture that we can achieve it ourselves. Of course, scripture is no substitute for knowledge itself. But it is an indispensable means to it Rāmānuja writes:

> He who wishes to attain Brahman must acquire two kinds of knowledge, both of them having Brahman

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318. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 164
319. K. C. Varadachari, *Sri Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 159.

> for their object · an indirect one which springs from the study of the *sāstras*, viz The *Veda*, *Śikṣa*, *Kalpa*, and so on, and a direct one which springs from the concentrated meditation [yoga] [320]

But such meditation does not occur without the 'grace' of the Supreme Person It originates, says Rāmānuja, "in the mind through the grace of the Supreme Person, who is pleased and conciliated by the different kinds of acts of sacrifice and worship duly performed by the Devotee day after day."[321] Again, "it is only in the state of perfect conciliation or endearment, i e, in meditation bearing the character of devotion, that an intuition of Brahman takes place, not in any other state "[322]

Thus the existence of God is a truth that only a certain type of experience can reveal And it is an experience which, in the last analysis, is indescribable This is not to say that moral experience, empirical observation and discursive reason count for nothing in the search for God True, their deliverances are inconclusive when employed for the purpose of demonstrating God's existence, but as throwing light upon his nature they are indispensable

God as the Principle of Relation

The world and the finite selves in it are not swallowed up in the infinite self About this Rāmānuja is clear It is in describing their relationship that his pronouncements become less lucid, which is not surprising considering that the problem is one of the thorniest of all metaphysical problems If a relationship exists, it must be of a peculiar kind since the terms involved, the finite and the infinite, are strictly incommensurable Rāmānuja is clearer about what the relationship is not than what it is So he says that it is not a relationship in the sense of ground and consequent , nor is it comparable to the relation of substance and quality , and finally it is not a relationship of inherence

320 Sri Ramanuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p 284
321 *Ibid*, p 699
322 *Ibid*, p 617

(samavāya). It must be thought of, Rāmānuja suggests, in terms of functional dependence.[323] But more than this he hardly tells us. All things depend upon the supreme mind or personality which supports, controls and enjoys them for his own supreme purposes.[324] "God alone is the absolute self of all, who supports all forms of matter, its unmanifested nature and its mutable existences, for He it is who destines (wills) their changes and transformations and as such is their master."[325] In using the term functional to describe the relationship between God and the world, Rāmānuja is intent to bring out that God is a person and that his relation to his creatures cannot be conveyed by categories that more properly describe the world than God's relation to it, such categories as causality, inherence, ground and consequent. For that matter they do not properly describe even the relation between finite selves.

Further, the relationship is such that it detracts neither from the unconditioned reality of the Supreme Self nor from the reality of the finite selves that depend upon it. In it the unity of God is preserved, as are the individual selves, and also the world of matter. The relationship does not obliterate the distinctive features of each of these three orders of existence. Again, by his use of the phrase functional relationship, Rāmānuja is concerned to emphasize the pervasiveness of the divine nature. Of Brahman he writes: "They call him *Samyadvāma,* for all blessings go towards him. He is also *Vāmani,* for he leads all blessings. He is also *Bhāmani,* for he shines in all worlds. And all these attributes can be reconciled with the highest Self only."[326] In a word, Brahman is the universal bond, the goal of all things. Reference to the finite selves is always reference as well to Brahman, who is the inner self of all of

323. K. C. Varadachari, *Sri Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge,* p. 143.
324. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam,* p 207.
325. K. C. Varadachari, *Sri Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge,* p. 144.
326. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam,* p. 272.

them.[327] On the one hand, he is the infinite unity in the sense that he has infinite apprehension and direct intution, on the other the finite self to the extent that it shares in such apprehension and intuition participates in the life of the divine.

The Divine Personality as Unifying Principle

The world is a process of change and it is also a unity. Now, according to Rāmānuja the enabling principle of this unity in difference, of this oneness in manyness, is not mere consciousness, still less a generic universal or concept or idea. No mere abstract principle can account for the kind of organic unity that permits of differences. It is only in the activity of a concrete spiritual being that the answer to our problem is to be found. This being or person subordinates the multiplicity of the world to his will and pleasure, and ordains its course. As conscious he is the very principle of unity, as concrete, he embraces difference within himself, and as personality he is active and self-propagating. This being is of course God or the Supreme Self (*Puruṣottama*).

To Rāmānuja, then, God is a person, and because he is a person, is the great unifying principle that brings all things together, not into a featureless but organic unity. In such a unity we have an ordered system of relations in which the relations are not all of the same type nor the relata all of the same kind. In Rāmānuja's view this is the highest kind of unity and belongs peculiarly to personality or spirit. It is in personality alone that unity comes to express itself in purpose, in works, cognition, enjoyment and freedom. At the poles apart from personality is *prakrti* which neither organizes nor sustains vital life. But *prakrti* itself, while it represents, so to speak, a principle of entropy in the philosophy of Rāmānuja, and is thus totally opposed to personality or the principle of order, is

327. K. C Varadachari, *Sri Rāmānuja's Theory of Knowledge*, p. 130

yet overcome in Brahman or the divine self, and is a hurdle that the finite self is capable of overcoming.[328]

BOWNE'S CONCEPTION OF GOD

To Bowne likewise God is the supreme personality. Indeed the concept of personality is the key to the problems of metaphysics. The final realities are persons, and if the world of experience is meaningful it is because of the existence of a supreme personality of which it is in some sort the expression. Nothing exists but what it is ascribable to the activity of the divine person. But God is not only the source, he is as well the goal of all activity. Further, personality is not only metaphysical but is a moral principle. Persons are the seat and source of values, and the Supreme Person the final seat and source. God is the guarantor of the objectivity of values and of the possibility of their realization. We turn now to the question whether the existence of a God of this nature can be demonstrated.

The Proveability of God

Historically two types of argument have been used in the attempt to prove the existence of God, namely, the inductive which appeals to experience and the speculative which invokes epistemological and metaphysical considerations. In the inductive class Bowne places the cosmological and teleological arguments, together with the argument from finite intelligence.

The cosmological argument takes its start from the fact that the universe appears to be governed by law. It is an order, not a chaos. Now it is open to us to attribue this order either to an intelligent or non-intelligent cause. If we choose the second alternative, we are bound to see in matter the ultimate cause of things. Needless to say Bowne rejects such a position. His chief argument against it is that a non-intelligent agency is incapable of producing an intelligent order. But since this is the very point at issue, Bowne's contention appears to be question-begging. In

328. Sri Rāmānuja, *Sri Bhashyam*, p. 488.

any case, he is convinced that it is by postulating a living intelligence that the laws of nature become meaningful. So it is the first alternative that occurs to him. He believes it is the most coherent answer that can be given to the question as to the source of order in the universe. It assimilates the facts, he says, "to our own experience and offers the only ground of order of which experience offers any suggestion."[329] Accordingly, "if we adopt this view, all the facts become luminous and consequent."[330] It will be observed that Bowne is not saying that the cosmological argument amounts to a demonstration, but that it is a reasonable hypothesis.

In Bowne's view the trouble with the teleological argument is that the appearance of plan and purpose in the universe on which it is based is that the appearance is not proof of the reality. Mechanism can explain the facts of nature and we need not go behind it. Moreover, the argument suffers from the untenable analogy it draws between human and cosmic purpose. Bowne declares:

> There is no analogy between human activity and cosmic activity. We know that purpose rules in human action, but we have no experience of world-making and can conclude nothing concerning cosmic action. The distance is too great, and knowledge is too scant to allow any inference.[331]

Nor is Bowne satisfied with the argument that passes from the experience of minds in the universe to the affirmation of a world-ground that is intelligent. This argument is merely a variant of the teleological argument, and is open to the same objections. The fact is that the existence of minds is not inconsistent with cosmic mechanism, just as mechanism is not incompatible with purpose.

If inductive considerations fail to carry us very far towards proving the existence of an intelligent world-

329 Borden P. Bowne, *Theism*, pp 69-70.
330 *Ibid*, p. 70
331. *Ibid*, p. 89.

ground, there are speculative arguments that carry us further. And Bowne proceeds to formulate his own version of such arguments. First he launches an attack on the mechanistic position, especially its conception of thought as itself being a purely mechanical occurrence.[332] Mechanical causation rules out the possibility of freedom of thought, for if the acceptance or rejection of a belief depends on the relative strength or weakness of its antecedents, and not upon a judgment of its truth or falsity, then rationality is at an end.[333] Only where there is freedom can truth and freedom have any relevance. So Bowne writes:

> The rational mind must not be controlled by its states, but must control them. It must be able to stand apart from its ideas and test them. It must be able to resist the influence of habit and association, and to undo the irrational conjunctions of custom. It must also be able to think twice, or to reserve its conclusion until the inner order of reason has been reached. Unless it can do this, all beliefs sink into effects, and the distinction of rational and irrational, of truth and error vanishes.[334]

Thought makes sense only on the assumption that it is free.

> Rationality demands freedom in the finite knower; and this, in turn, is incompatible with necessity in the world-ground. This freedom does not, indeed, imply the power on the part of the mind to coerce its conclusions, but only to rule itself according to pre-conceived standards.... there must be a law of reason in the mind with which volition cannot tamper; and there must also be the power to determine ourselves accordingly. Neither can dispense with the other. The law of reason in us does not compel obedience, else error would be impossible. Rationality is reached only as the mind accepts the law and determines itself accordingly.[335]

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332. Borden P. Bowne, *Theism*, p. 124.
333. *Ibid*, p. 125.
334. *Ibid*, p. 125.
335. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

Bowne's argument so far is then that the finite knower is free simply by virtue of being a knower, and further that this freedom is "incompatible with necessity in the world-ground."[336] Having established so much, Bowne turns to certain epistemological considerations in favour of the existence of God. The study of objective reality, he asserts, assumes the fact of law and system, or a universal adjustment of "each to all in a common scheme of order."[337] He says further that all study assumes that this system is an intelligible and rational one. "A rational cosmos is the implict assuption of objective cognition."[338] Now this system appears to be extra-mental, yet the fact is:

> That the basal certainties of knowledge are not the ontological existence of material and mechanical things, but rather the co-existence of persons, the community of intelligence and the system of common experience. And these are not given as speculative deductions, but as unshakeable practical certainties. We cannot live intellectually at all without recognizing other persons than ourselves, and without assuming that the laws of intelligence are valid for all alike and that all have the same general objects in experience.[339]

In this emphasis upon the co-existence of persons as the basal certainty of knowledge, what Bowne is leading up to is that thought is not a mere passive reflection of things, but an activity by which "the mind in knowing things is simply manifesting itself by putting its own laws and forms into and upon its experience."[340] Bowne now moves a step towards abolishing the dualism between thought and thing. Unless the thing-world has some semblance to the thought-world, knowledge would be impossible. And if it is possible, it is because thought and things have the same laws. Hence "the thing-world is

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336 Borden P. Bowne, *Theism*, p 126.
337. *Ibid*, p 127
338 *Ibid*, p 127
339. *Theism*, p 128.
340. *Ibid.*, p 130

essentially a thought-world which roots in and expresses thought."[341]

To Bowne, therefore, knowledge involves a rational universe, a knowing human mind, or a community of such minds, and the identity of the categories of human thought with the principles of cosmic being. It presupposes further that the mind's thought truly ponders the objective facts, and finally it involves an identity of rational nature in human beings.[342] The whole process of knowing the world appears to suggest that here is a thinker at both ends—a supreme thinker behind the world and finite thinkers capable of knowing the world. "If nature," says Bowne, "expresses the thought of a thinker beyond it, it is quite credible that we should find thought n it."[343] The existence of knowledge proves that the world is knowable, and this knowability testifies to the existence of a supreme thinker who is God. Such is Bowne's demonstration by way of epistemology, of the existence of God.

Metaphysics to which Bowne turns next, reinforces, he thinks, this epistemological argument for God's existence. It does so by adding considerations of its own to the argument against an independently existing material-mechanical world. "Here metaphysics takes up and completes the argument for epistemology by showing that the self-existent mechanical world on which atheism builds is a product of superficial sense thinking which understands neither itself nor its problem."[344] Thus Bowne addresses himself to showing that neither space nor time can be considered as real existences apart from thought. They exist, no less than sense objects, only in and for thought Bowne's position here seems to be weak and unclear. He writes: "All that takes place in space and time is at best only the movement for translati the world of ideas into act and

341. Borden P. Bowne, *Theism*, p. 130.
342. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
343. *Ibid*, p. 134.
344. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

making it accessible to finite minds; but in itself and apart from this teleological function, the spatial and temporal fact is nothing articulate or intelligible."[345]

Time can have no final reality, Bowne further argues, because nothing can exist for the mind except through fixed timeless ideas. The case is that the mind grasps and fixes the temporal flow by timeless ideas which give the abiding meaning of which the temporal movement is the bearer of expression.[346] Ideas as meanings are timeless realities and "the world in space and time is a movement according to ideas and for the setting forth of ideas behind the movement, or immanent in it."[347] In other worlds, the real world is the thought world. This world, it is true, manifests under the forms of space and time, but does not exist in space and time as extra-mental realities.

In Kantian fashion Bowne asserts that "space and time themselves are no proper existences apart from Mind."[348] He goes further, maintaining that nothing that is really in succession can exist at all, even time itself. And Bowne thinks the reason is simple If everything were only in succession, everything would break up into an indefinite plurality; so that all unity, and hence all reality, would disappear. Assign an ontological status to time and reality in any comprehensible sense must disappear. For reality is either a unity or it is nothing. And this unity stems from the mind, Bowne claims.

> Metaphysics shows that active intelligence alone fills out the true notion of being, unity, identity, and causality. On the impersonal and mechanical plane these categories all vanish or contradict themselves.[349]

Again,

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345. Borden P Bowne, *Theism*, p 137.
346. *Ibid*, pp. 137-38.
347. *Ibid*, p 138.
348. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
349. *Ibid*, p. 140.

> A world of meanings presupposes mind, A system of relations implies intelligence as its source and seat[350]

Now this intelligence in and for which the universe exists is obviously not ours, so that "there must be a cosmic intelligence as its abiding condition, and in reference to which alone the affirmation of a universe has any meaning"[351] But it is not to be supposed that world is merely a conception in the divine understanding; it is above all a form of divine activity The terms real and rational as applied to the world signify its activity on the one hand and its intelligibility on the other Abstract as this argument is, and unlikely to find favour except in speculative circles, it is yet, Bowne feels, in agreement with the facts

> If we suppose the world is founded in intelligence, we find the facts in their great outlines agreeing thereto There is a rational work according to methods, for intelligible ends To be sure, our knowledge is limited, but so far as we can understand, we find the marks of transcendent wisdom[352]

Bowne puts the case for holding that the universe is founded in intelligence even more strongly in the following passage

> It seems plain that the belief in a free and intelligent ground of things is as well founded as any objective belief whatever, and that this belief is one which enters so intimately into our mental life that philosophy and science, and even rationality itself stand or fall with it[353]

The World-Ground as Unconditioned Reality

God is the supreme unity, self-dependent and self-determined As such he necessarily contains all his determinations within himself, and can never be subjected to any law of development without self-contradiction Only the finite and dependent can be so subject Of the divine reality Bowne writes

350 Borden P Bowne, *Theism*, p 141
351 *Ibid*, p 144
352 *Ibid*, p 148
353 *Ibid*, p 148

> It is the source of law, not its subject. It founds necessity, instead of being ruled by it. Hence the infinite, or the independent, must always be regarded as the highest term of the universe in every regarded - It is the complete and perfect fullness of life, power, wisdom, and goodness, of which the highest finite is but the imperfect image.[354]

Yet Bowne, while he insists that God is not conditioned by anything beyond Himself, speaks as if there were limits within Himself. In *The Philosophy of Theism* he writes:

> The world-ground is, indeed, unconditioned by anything beyond itself; but it must be conditioned by its own nature in any case, and the question arises whether this conditioning involves temporal sequence in the infinite life itself.[355]

Bowne is well aware of the serious speculative difficulties that are involved in such a view. He goes on to say:

> We should have to hold that the world-ground is subject to a law of development, and comes only gradually to itself, or, rather, that there is some constitutional in the world-ground which forbids it always to be in full possession of itself. In fact we should have to limit to the extent of this necessity that free and self-centered cause which reason demands as the only adequate world-ground. In consequence reason will always assume that the world-ground is strictly unconditioned until some necessity is found for viewing it as conditioned.[356]

What is involved here is nothing less than the problem of the relation of time to eternity. Elsewhere Bowne has been concerned to show that time has no ontological status, yet he is here prepared to admit the possibility that God exists in time or time in God, who is the supreme reality. It is clear that Bowne does not speak with one voice on this subject. In the *Metaphysics* he categorically asserts that God is changeless and eternal, self-possessed and unconditioned. And of a being thus self-possessed, he writes:

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354 Borden P. Bowne, *Theism*, pp. 269-70.
355 Borden P Bowne, *Philosophy of Theism*, p. 151.
356 *Ibid*, pp. 151-52

> A being which is in full possession of itself, so that it does not come to itself successively, would not be in time. Such a being can be conceived as having a changeless knowledge and changeless life. As such, it would be without memory and without expectation, but would be in the absolute enjoyment of itself.[357]

It cannot be said that Bowne ever satisfactorily resolves this apparent contradiction in his ideas of God or the world-ground. If we may venture a guess as to the reason for Bowne's vacillation between the idea of God as eternal and God as being in time, it is this. More fundamental than anything else in Bowne's thought is the notion of personality, above all the personality of the divine being.. Now it is difficult to ascribe personality to a being, who, if he is out of time must be, in Bowne's own words, "without memory and without expectation."[358] Accordingly, he is prepared to say definitively that God is timeless, and he *resorts to the somewhat makeshift theory that while God* is not in time, time is in God. Bowne does the best he can with an old and intractable problem.

God as Supreme Personality

Bowne will have nothing to do with the sort of theory which ascribes doubleness, of whatever sort, to the personality of God. He is especially opposed to the view, associated with the name of Spinoza, according to which, God consists of thought on the one hand and extension on the other. He writes:

> Some have proposed to conceive the world-ground as a double-faced substance; *on the one side extension* and form, and *on the other* side life and reason. These two sides constitute the reality of the outer and inner world respectively. This conception finds expression in Spinoza, and in many modern monistic systems. It is based upon the antiquated notion of substance as extended stuff, and upon the fictitious abstraction of thought.[359]

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357. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p 240.
358 *Ibid*, p. 240
359. Borden P Bowne, *Philosophy of Theism*, p. 123

No less antipathetic to Bowne is the conception of God as a transcendental x, as a pure something, whether pure will, intelligence, or what not.

> The world-ground has been called pure will, unconscious intelligence, impersonal reason, impersonal spirit, universal life, etc. But these too are empty phrases, obtained by unlawful abstraction.[360]

All such views are incompatible with personality properly understood. Personality is not to be confused with pure corporeality, or pure form, or pure intelligence. Such things are mere abstractions. To Bowne personality is self-knowledge and self-control.

> By personality, then, we mean only self-knowledge and self-control. Where these are present we have personal being; where they are absent the being is impersonal.[361]

It is personality in this sense that finds its highest expression in God, and exists only imperfectly in human beings. God is the infinite personality and he is unchangeable. But Bowne is quick to explain the sense in which he is using the term 'unchangeable'

> The unchangeability of God means only the constancy and continuity of the divine nature which extends through all the divine acts as their law and source.[362]

Personality alone is capable of providing that abiding and identical principle which is superior to change and constant in change.[363] And God is thus superior, always present, in that He comprehends all experience at once. In him all things exist as a *totum simul* So far as the finite world is concerned, God is the law of its activity, and the change that takes place in it is not a change in God but in things. Bowne is here contending that "there may be a grasp of

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360 Borden P Bowne, *Philosophy of Theism*, p. 124.
361 *Ibid*, p 128
362 *Ibid.*, p 146

reality which shall constitute it all present If this were allowed, the non-temporality of the world-ground would offer no difficulty."[364]

SUMMARY AND COMPARISON

It will have been evident from the foregoing, that without overlooking the differences between Ramānuja's conception of God and Bowne's, we may yet say that the likeness between them is still greater Bowne's position is, of course, that of theistic personalism and there are sufficient indications in Ramānuja that his position is roughly similar. To both thinkers God is the ground of all being, at once an immanent reality and at the same time transcendent The immanence of God entails His agency in the world, while his transcendence emphasizes that He is more than the world and hence His apartness from it In this way both thinkers avoid pantheism, though the case is less clear in Rāmānuja than in Bowne Above all, to the one as to the other, the world-ground is of a personal nature It is only in personality that a truly unitary principle is to be found And God is such a principle God is the free and intelligent ground of things He is the initiator of change in the world, while remaining Himself unchanged While both thinkers deprecate all abstract approaches to God, Bowne believes that there are certain epistemological and metaphysical considerations which go some way towards proving His existence But Rāmānuja holds that His existence is evident only in what he calls direct perception or intuition Finally for both thinkers God or the supreme personality is the seat and source of all such values as supreme bliss, supreme consciousness and absolute goodness

363 Borden P Bowne, *Philosophy of Theism* p 147
364 *Ibid*., pp. 154 55

CHAPTER V

CRITICAL COMMENTS AND CONCLUSION

The pitfalls of a comparative study such as we have pursued in the foregoing pages are obvious enough, though by no means as avoidable as they are obvious They are chiefly of two sorts on the one hand there is the temptation to see similarities where none exist, or to magnify those that do And on the other hand there is the danger of minimizing differences, even of overlooking them altogether And when the comparison is of two philosophers as far apart in time as Ramanuja and Bowne, the need for caution becomes especially great While Bowne presents no special problems of exegesis, Ramanuja is an excessively difficult philosopher No really definitive or critical text exists of his works nor any tradition of commentary upon them It is as if we were to undertake a study of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* without the advantages of a good text of that work and in ignorance of the numerous commentaries ancient, medieval and modern, that have served to illuminate it

Such are the difficulties or some of them, that have attended our study difficulties that we hardly dare claim to have surmounted altogether The interesting thing is that our philosophers living in worlds as utterly dissimilar as that of India in the 11th century and America in the 19th, yet have enough in common to make comparison between them fruitful

In this final chapter we shall recapitulate the agreements as well as disagreements between Ramanuja and Bowne after which we shall proceed to a consideration of certain crucial issues posed by their

THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN RĀMĀNUJA AND BOWNE

No philosopher starts his thinking in a vacuum, and Rāmānuja and Bowne are no exceptions The one as well as the other was well acquainted with the work of his predecessors and drew generously upon them in constructing his own system It is not surprising that both thinkers are most indebted to their idealistic forerunners at the same time that they are critical of them In the case of Ramānuja he was influenced by such systems of thought as the *Jaina*, the *Buddhistic*, the *Śankhya*, the *Yoga*, and the *Vedantic* In the same way, Bowne learned his philosophy, though as no merely passive pupil, from the idealisms of Leibniz, Berkeley, Kant, Hegel, and Lotze He also owes a debt to Herbart who was not strictly an idealist

Rāmānuja takes over from the *Jaina* system the idea that reality consists of a plurality of selves, that these selves constitute a system in terms of which all merely partial experience is to be judged Again, inspired by the *Yogachara* school of subjective idealism Rāmānuja is led to regard ultimate reality as being of the nature of mind or consciousness Further, he borrows from the *Yogachāra* the notion that the Absolute Mind preserves in memory the entire past and that it is with the aid of his accumulated experience that God creates a new world upon the dissolution of the old From the *Sautrantika* school of *Buddhism*, Rāmanuja adopts the idea of levels of knowledge with its corollary that sense experience yields knowledge, albeit partial In agreement with the Sānkhya system Rāmānuja regards the self and matter as independent realities, but he adds to this view by his contention that the two are related or comprehended in God or Brahman Like *Sankhya* he considers matter as eternal and uncreated Rāmānuja's link with the *Yoga* system derives from his emphasis upon purification of mind and body through concentration on Brahman as a means of final release

But it is especially to the absolute idealism of Śankara that Ramanuja is indebted As in the one thinker, so in the

other, consciousness is central, the basis of all knowledge and experience To Ramanuja, however, the absolute is not only a conscious personality, but a synthesis of all its determinations, a point which he emphasizes as against Sankara for whom the Absolute is pure undifferentiated thought All knowledge, Ramanuja insists, involves relation, as is testified to by the very nature of judgment Together with Sankara he holds that being is the absolute category, but unlike his predecessor he emphasizes the concrete nature of being To emphasize anything else is to emphasize an abstraction, as indeed he accuses Sankara of doing It is in this connection that Ramanuja exhibits an affiliation with the dualistic system of thought represented chiefly by Madhava To both thinkers all knowledge is determinate knowledge As for Ramanuja's relation, finally, to the system of unity in difference, he agrees that the world can only be understood in relation to Brahman It is with regard to this relation between the world and Brahman that Ramanuja seems to differ from the proponents of unity in difference To a greater extent than they he is anxious to preserve the identity of the absolute self and at the same time do justice to the fact of change

It is thus evident that Ramanuja chooses those elements in the thought of his predecessors which he is anxious to emphasize and develop in his own philosophy And Bowne does the same thing and there is a parallelism between the things he borrows and those that Ramanuja borrows, though this parallelism must not be pressed too hard Leibniz as Bowne himself tells us, furnishes the starting point of his philosophy, though it is "for the most part by strictly independent reflections' that Bowne reaches his conclusions[1] The theory of monads no doubt suggested to Bowne his conception of a plurality of selves, just as Leibniz's theory of pre established harmony finds its counterpart in Bowne's notion of interaction according to which the very possibility of interaction depends upon the meditation of a supreme self or God Further in describing

1 Borden P Bowne *Metaphysics* 1st ed preface p vii

his metaphysical system as Kantianized Berkeleianism, Bowne acknowledges his debt to Kant and Berkeley The idea of reality as consisting of immaterial substances, that is to say, spirits, human as well as divine, which undergoes a great development at Bowne's hands, bespeaks the influence of Berkeley as well as Leibniz But the important thing for Bowne is not so much Berkeley's immaterialism, but his emphasis upon the activity of spirits Indeed, for Berkeley the proof of the existence of spirits is precisely their activity, their reality being proportionate to the degree of their activity, so that the supreme reality is God, who is pure activity To Bowne, likewise, a distinctive mark of being resides in some power of action In other words, to be is to act But the conception of personality, as developed by Bowne, while its seeds are to be found in Berkeley, goes beyond him, especially Bowne, more than Berkeley makes the will crucial in personality, and it is in personality that Bowne finds the model for permanence in change For both Rāmānuja and Bowne God is the immanent principle of activity and order

Bowne's debt to Kant is great, though his divergences from that thinker are perhaps still greater To the one, as to the other, the categories are immanent mental principles in the absence of which experience would be impossible What Bowne misses in Kant is a sufficient emphasis upon purpose, a category which for Bowne is the highest of all and to be found only in a self-active, self-determining person And Hegel was no doubt an influence in helping Bowne to develop this notion For what Hegel has written about the character of mind is at many points in accord with what Bowne has written about the character of the self, above all its purposive character Further, Bowne's emphasis upon the necessary intelligibility of reality echoes Hegel's dictum that the real is the rational He accepts too, the Hegelian notion that reality is an organic whole, though the notion undergoes a great change at his hands It comes to mean an organic whole of purpose, in which the individual and his freedom so far from

disappearing, play a central role. And in line with his conception of the primacy of personality, Bowne unlike Hegel, undertakes to explain the categories in terms of the self. To both thinkers reality is, above all, conscious experience.

In Bowne's words it is Herbart who supplies Bowne with his method.[2] The German thinker held that the task of metaphysics is to bring experience under the law of non-contradiction and so render it consistent and comprehensible. And the method he elaborates to this end is one which he calls the method of relations. Yet, in adopting this method of Herbart's Bowne does not limit it merely to the search for logical consistency. Although Bowne is concerned to reconstruct and correct the common sense categories by developing a critical and coherent view of the concepts of experience, and so employs Herbart's method, he is also concerned to take a synoptic view of experience and so do justice to experience in all its aspects, even those that cannot be brought within the scope of formal logic.

If it is Leibniz who "furnishes the starting point" and Herbart who "supplies the method"[3] Bowne's conclusions are largely Lotzean in character, although he reached them in his own way.[4] As in Lotze, so in Bowne the distinctive mark of being is action, indeed, for both thinkers, being and action are inseparable. Reality is thus change, but it is also permanence. And this permanence in change is best exemplified in the self. The self is *the* type of reality and it is by analogy with the self and its inner experiences that all else is to be interpreted. Space and time have no ultimate metaphysical reality, rather they are the forms of mental activity. In thus making the self the central feature of their metaphysics, both Bowne and Lotze sought to reconcile monism and pluralism, mechanism and teleology, realism and idealism

2 Borden P Bowne, *Metaphysics*, "1st ed. preface", p. vii.
3. *Ibid.*, p. vii
4. *Ibid.*, p. vii.

In the light of all this, it is fair to say that the philosophic influences that counted for most in the development of the thought of Rāmānuja and Bowne were those specially calculated to further a personalistic outlook. Both thinkers shy away from everything abstract in their philosophic heritage and concentrate on those ideas and conceptions of their predecessors which emphasize the centrality of the self.

We turn now to a review of the ideas that Rāmānuja and Bowne share in common. First their methods of approach to the problems of philosophy are alike, though method is not a central preoccupation of either philosopher. Both are concerned to do justice to experience in all its aspects, extra-logical as well as logical, and to this end they employ a method which may generally be characterized as synoptic. It is a method that involves them in a rejection of the *a priori* and of all abstract universals, in the place of which they emphasize the concrete character of truth Wholeness is the ideal of both thinkers, and the progress of knowledge is a progress towards this ideal, in a word, progress towards comprehension of the infinite self. Given their view that reality is intelligible, it is not surprsing to find that Rāmānuja and Bowne see the criterion of truth as lying in coherence. Such a criterion is bound up with what they envisage as the truth about the world, namely, that it is a system of selves or a community of persons.

In their epistemologies both thinkers hold that knowledge to be trusted demands a metaphysical ground, so that for Rāmānuja as for Bowne, the theory of knowledge is inseparable from the theory of being. In the last analysis it is God who is the guarantor of the possibility of knowledge, just as God's unfolding in the world is the basis of the dynamic character of knowledge. In Bowne the point is expressed in his insistence that human knowledge is not merely a passive reflection of the world, but an activity underlying which is the divine activity. To Rāmānuja, all finite knowledge involves a passage from the indeterminate to the determinate, an activity which distinguishes as it

unites, and both the distinctions and the unity are expressions of he divine mind in the process of its unfolding. Both philosophers agree that the starting point of knowledge is sense experience, and agree further that at the sense level, as at all others, mind or consciousness is the constitutive principle. Again they agree that among the sources of knowledge, in addition to perception and inference, there is intuition by which truth is directly appropriated without the intermediation of discursive reasoning. And both accept authority as a still further source of knowledge. To both alike the judgment is the prime unit of knowledge, the exemplar on the logical level of the pervasive principle of unity in difference.

In their metaphysics the two thinkers are agreed in their rejection of the idea of pure being as an empty abstraction. Being as known to us is always qualified and determinate being. Further, being is not an inert substance, but a process of activity. It is casual, a system of dynamic relationships. The most significant point of resemblance between the two thinkers is their conception of being as a conscious subject. And it is this conception that leads them both to stress the concrete character of being. In Rāmānuja this conscious subject is equated with Brahman, while in Bowne it is equated with the world-ground or God. In either case, it is the principle of all that exists, one and eternal, yet manifesting itself in time and in change. Taking their cue from this supreme principle, whose nature is personal and conscious, both thinkers conceive of causality not merely as mechanical but purposive. For both believe that the clue to the real nature of causality is only to be found in the self and its activities. The highest expression of this causality derives from the activity of the absolute self, which is at once the cause and the goal of all process, immanent and transcendent at the same time.

Central to both Rāmānuja's and Bowne's conception of the world is the notion of self. Both emphasize the self as knower, both agree that the self is the basis of the unity of knowledge, both ascribe causal agency to the self.

Further, they agree that the finite selves are in some way comprehended within the supreme self, yet not lost in it, having an autonomy and freedom of their own But it is by virtue of their relationship to the infinite self that the finite selves achieve any measure of truth or insight

To both thinkers the world comes into being as a result of the activity of God, but whereas Bowne subscribes to an outright theory of creation, Rāmanuja appears to believe that the world develops out of the matter of Brahman But the two thinkers are at one in holding that this world once was not and came into existence by an act of the divine will Further, the will of God continuously manifests itself in the world, and the world is under His constant superintendence What transpires in the world can only be understood ultimately in terms of a divine plan and purpose Indeed, it is this teleological character of the world which is its most pervasive and deepest feature Thus no merely mechanistic explanation can reveal the whole truth about the world Mechanism itself is only intelligible in relation to the absolute self and its purposes To the question why a world exists at all, Rāmānuja and Bowne give similar answers To the one as to the other, the world is a moral proving ground In Rāmānuja's somewhat paradoxical view, it is a means to the release of the individual selves from the law of Karma, while in Bowne's view the world exists to further a supreme good, which is a community of moral persons

Neither thinker is disposed to overlook the problem of evil in the world, both grapple with it honestly, and both seek to avoid the usual cut and dried formulas in dealing with it They are both agreed in refusing to place responsibility for the existence of evil upon the absolute self. Both endow the self with free will, and it is by the exercise of his free will that man errs, just as it is by the same exercise that he redeems himself It is open to man to bring his will into conformity with the will of God This is his highest good, one which he is free to choose or not But it should be pointed out that Rāmānuja's concep-

tion of human freedom is less absolute than Bowne's.

To bring our summary to a head, we may say that for both Rāmānuja and Bowne there is an ultimate principle which explains all things and sutains them. And most important of all, they are agreed that the nature of this principle is personal. And all selves less than this ultimate principle are themselves active personalities distinct from each other and from the divine personality. The real is the personal, and there are a plurality of reals, and hence of selves which are welded into a system by the activity of the supreme self. This supreme self is the free and intelligent ground of all being, resident in the world where his agency is evident, yet transcending the world. He is the initiator of change, while remaining himself unchanged. He is the source of all values. And these values are all anchored in personality. Can the existence of such a God be proved? Both our thinkers adduce proofs, but neither is under the illusion that these proofs amount to absolute demonstration. To Rāmānuja, though less so to Bowne, more important than proof is the religious life itself, the conviction that comes not from speculation but from religious practice.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RĀMĀNUJA AND BOWNE

No student of the philosophies of Rāmānuja and Bowne can help being struck from the beginning by the difference in the feel and texture of the thought of the two men, struck as he may be at the same time by the resemblances between them. Of course, 'feel' and 'texture' are subjective things, but they are nonetheless real for that, as real as the particular points of difference that we shall proceed in a moment to enumerate. Our philosophers move in two different worlds, and though we are not prepared to go as far as a recent writer in accentuating the chasm between East and West,[5] indeed our whole thesis would remove this chasm, at least so far as Rāmānuja and Bowne are con-

5 William S Haas, *The Destiny of the Mind*, (MacMillan Co, New York, 1956).

cerned, it is yet true that there are profound differences between Eastern and Western modes of thought The recent writer whom we have just mentioned puts his finger on an especially far-reaching difference He writes

> The Eastern mind, attracts and penetrates the non-subject in manifold ways so as to divest it of as much of its otherness as possible But it reaches its clearest expression when the subject returns to and is alone with itself Thus the central problem of the East consists in the relation of the subject to itself And inseparable from this relation, is its discovery of the real subject It can thus be seen how identification is operative in the subjective attitude and how it triumphs in the subject's coincidence with the absolute subject The West, on the contrary, aims at the discovery of the absolute object as its main target and revolves round the problems of the relation between subject and object Uniting the variety of things which its objective attitude creates in every field of existence, is the method it employs to achieve its final purpose [6]

And he goes on to say

> When as in the East the subject is posited first, it becomes the central unit Correspondingly the non-subject—the other—will then appear as multiplicity, as the indifferent, unorganized juxtaposition of the phenomenon And the appropriate way of dealing with and disposing of this multiplicity will be to reduce as much as possible the number of its components and to bring the rest closer to the subject for potential ultimate identification with the subject This then is the structure of the Eastern mind—juxtaposition and identity On the other hand, in the West it is the object that is posited first And in this case the world facing the subject constitutes the great object Despite its multifariousness it does not fall apart Man enters the cosmos as a part and his effort to organize the phenomena assumes quite consistently the form unity in variety In the end we see therefore that these two structures are composed of two parts The base consists of variety in the West as juxtaposition in the East The operative device is unification as contrasted with identification [7]

6 *Ibid* p 119
7 William S Haas *The Destiny of the Mind* pp 119 20

This is a shrewd observation, though like all historical generalizations it is not to be taken too absolutely It is precisely Bowne's emphasis upon the subject or self that brings him into relation to Indian thought, and to Ramānuja in particular But whereas Ramanuja was working within a tradition, Bowne in some measure was revolting against a tradition It is for this reason perhaps, that Rāmānuja's personalism is more thoroughgoing than Bowne's It is more single-minded, more focussed upon consciousness itself in contradiction to the objects of consciousness. With regard to this preoccupation with consciousness in itself, Haas writes with such perceptiveness that we cannot forbear quoting him once more

> In exploring the potential states of consciousness the East disregards to the utmost possible degree contents and objectives Moreover, this exploration is not achieved by theoretical speculation on their nature, but by realizing them Or to express the same fact in another way, the East uses speculation mainly as a means to realization Because of the intrinsic relation between being and cognition this cannot be otherwise [8]

Rāmānuja illustrates the point well For him philosophy is not merely an exercise of the thinking power and thought of man, but of his whole being It is a way of life Haas further states

> Western cognition is preoccupied with the objects of consciousness, be they physical or non-physical, and it is intent on building them into conceptual systems In Plato's realm of ideas all the ideas which constitute the human soul are to be found, such as unity, the good, the just, or the ideas pertinent to reason as the true and the like This should be stressed because one looks in vain for the idea of the subject, the self, the personality So likewise when Aristotle defines the supreme being, the absolute, in the impersonal term of the knowing of knowing, this definition is open to misinterpretation if translated by self-knowledge Nowhere is there an immediate relationship

8 William S Haas, *The Destiny of the Mind*, p 171

> between knowledge and the object of knowledge on the one hand, and the subject on the other. Still less is there any inherent dependence on the subject of knowledge and the contents of knowledge.[9]

Bowne is less subject to this charge than most Western thinkers, but subject to it he is in some measure, and the degree of that measure is the degree of his difference from Rāmānuja.

With this general but real difference between Eastern and Western thought in mind, we proceed to a summary of the particular differences between Rāmānuja and Bowne. We begin with their theories of knowledge.

There is far less emphasis in Rāmānuja than in Bowne upon the conceptual aspect of cognition, not that the Indian thinker is unaware of the importance of the concept, but knowledge for him is more than conceptualization. All knowledge, he recognizes, involves a process which comes to fruition not in a concept but in a state of being. True, knowledge involves perception, inference, intuition, even authority, but it involves these only as it involves the whole being of the knower. Again, Rāmānuja is aware that involved in all knowledge is the subject-object relation, or better, the subject-other relation, but the otherness that confronts consciousness is not the antagonistic substantiality suggested by the term object. Rather it is qualitative and as such absorbed in the activity of consciousness. Indeed, the whole object of experience, cognitive and other, is the achievement of an immediate relation between the world and subject. In contrast to Bowne's theory which, we think, may be characterized as epistemological dualism, Rāmānuja holds to a presentative theory according to which what we know are not mental entities which stand for the objects known, but the objects themselves. In line with our Indian thinker's view of knowledge as a form of being, a state of consciousness, that is lucid and self-sufficient, rather than theoretical insight, he does not, like Bowne, draw up a

9 William S Haas, *The Destiny of the Mind*, p 171

categorical scheme. Such a scheme, while it serves to link subject and object, also has the effect of keeping them apart, at least of separating the known object from the metaphysical object. For Rāmānuja the progress of knowledge consists precisely in a recession from otherness. Hence, he has little, if anything, to say about epistemological categories. Indeed, the concept generally plays a lesser role in Rāmānuja than in Bowne, for in the one the aim is to overcome the gap between subject and object, while in the other it is to mediate between them, and to this end the concept is an indispensable instrument.[10] In justice to Bowne, it should be added that, as important as the concept is for him, it is the self which heals the disparity between subject and object. On the whole it is true to say that the mind plays a less creative role in Rāmānuja than in Bowne.

In the metaphysics of Rāmānuja we find no such searching examination of the notion of cause such as is to be found in Bowne, though both thinkers agree that purpose is inseparable from true causation. But the difficulty is that we find no clear notion of cause in Rāmānuja, nor does he appear to regard the problem as an important one. And this is no doubt owing to the fact that nature and natural science play little part in his system. He has little or no idea of nature as ruled by the law of causation. Nature herself is essentially life and its laws are those of life and consciousness. And it is from inner experience that we understand causality. We find the idea in Bowne, too, but we find much more besides, above all his critique of mechanistic causation Such causation has only a limited validity and stands in contrast to the true type of causality which manifests itself in a self-active and self-determining person. As compared with Bowne's highly developed personalistic theory of causality, Rāmānuja's treatment remains less clear and meagrely developed.

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10 cf. William S Haas, *The Destiny of the Mind*, p. 182.

As in the case of causality, so with regard to the problem of change and identity, both our thinkers look to the self for a solution of the problem. But here again we find differences between Rāmānuja and Bowne, Rāmānuja distinguishes the self or soul from consciousness, the one being permanent and unchanging, the other experiencing both the changing and the permanent. So it is not the soul that changes but consciousness. Now Bowne, on occasion, speaks as if both change and identity were functions of the self. At other times he appears to espouse Rāmānuja's view that it is the self or soul as such which is permanent and unchanging. Change itself is ascribed by both thinkers to the activity of God, with this difference, that the activity of Brahman, in whom matter in some form exists, is a materially mediated activity, while in Bowne God's activity in the material world is the energizing of his will. Thus the phenomenal world for Bowne comes into being by an outright act of constant creation on the part of God, while for Rāmānuja the material of the world is in some sort present in Brahman from the start, though for the one thinker as for the other all change is initiated by the supreme self.

It is with regard to the status of space and time that our two thinkers appear to be farthest apart Rāmānuja's treatment of the problem is anything but clear, but in whatever sense he is using the terms space and time, he seems to assign to them an ontological co-existence. What else can he mean when he speaks of space and time as coeval with Brahman ? It might be said that by space and time here Rāmānuja has in mind not the space and time of the phenomenal world, but a noumenal space and time. But there is no trace of such a distinction in Rāmānuja, assuming that the distinction has any meaning in the first place.

True, Rāmānuja does speak of time as a special power by which Brahman unfolds his activity, but there is no reason to believe that by 'special power' he means time in some special sense. Of course, given his view of cycles of existence, Rāmānuja, it may be, conceives of time as being more than one dimensional and linear. But whether he

does or not, the question remains, what precisely is the status of time and space in the philosophy of Rāmānuja? We are inclined to think that he assigns them an ontological status, as Bowne does not, certainly so far as space is concerned. For the latter thinker the reality of space and, perhaps, of time, is a purely phenomenal reality. Concerning this whole question of space and time in Rāmānuja, it should be borne in mind that what he is trying to do in his metaphysics is to so interpret ultimate reality as to diminish the distance between it and the finite subject. And it is in keeping with this effort that he should regard time and space as objective. So, too, it may at first sight seem odd to assign a body, however ethereal, to Brahman, but when we remember that in Indian thought the animate and inanimate do not stand in sharp opposition to one another, the oddity becomes less. And further, it is on this account that Rāmānuja has less trouble than Bowne with the mind-body problem. Since the psychical and the physical are not for Rāmānuja stark opposites, he can adopt a relatively straightforward theory of interaction, as Bowne, for whom they are opposites, cannot. Bowne is obliged to fall back upon God as the mediator between the two. Nor is he able to explain how two such diverse things as mind and body come to be associated in the first place, except to say that mind and body are created together through the energizing of God's will.

Although the self plays a central role in the philosophies of both men, it cannot be said that Rāmānuja and Bowne view the self in quite the same way. For one thing, they differ in their views of the relation of the finite self to the infinite self. Although Bowne allows of an interaction between them, it is difficult to see how this takes place, given the gulf that separates man from God. Rāmānuja avoids this dilemma by making the selves parts or aspects of the 'body' of Brahman The selves, he says, proceed from Brahman as rays proceed from the sun. Accordingly the finite self for Rāmānuja enters into the closet possible relation with the supreme reality, which is Brahman, so close

indeed as to suggest the loss of the self in the Absolue. But as Haas points out "the idea of a Godhead which exists in and for itself and is essentially independent of man's self,"[11] is one that does not exist in Indian philosophy at its peak. Nor is this all. In Rāmānuja the essence of the self is consciousness divested of all that stands in opposition to it. The polarity of subject and object which is characteristic of Western ways of thought and which by various devices Western thinkers have sought to overcome never appears with the same sharpness in Rāmānuja as it appears in Bowne. The decisive datum for Rāmānuja is not the self that reasons and conceptualizes, but selfhood as a condition of being, as a state of consciousness striving to become an untarnished mirror, so to speak.

In contrast to Bowne's far more empirical view of the self, Rāmānuja's may be characterized as mystical. And as mystical, it is open to the criticism that it involves not the affirmation of selfhood, but its dissolution in Brahman. In behalf of Bowne, it should be pointed out that he is throughly aware of the risk he runs in emphasizing the all-embracing character of the ultimate one. Accordingly, he insists that, unlike anything else in the universe, it is selfhood alone, finite spirit, that "attains to substantial otherness to the infinite."[12]

Both our thinkers assert the freedom of the will, but here too there are differences between them. We have seen that the category of causality plays a far more important role in the philosophy of Bowne than in that of Rāmānuja And because of this, Bowne is faced with the problem of reconciling freedom with causal necessity, or at any rate is faced with it in a far more important form than is Rāmānuja. To an unsympathetic critic it might appear that for Bowne freedom is simply the negation of necessity and that man as endowed with freedom is set over against the rest of the universe. Now, with regard to the latter charge, if

11. William S. Haas, *The Destiny of the Mind*, p. 140.
12. Borden P. Bowne, *Metaphysics*, p 137.

charge it be, there is a measure of truth in it. Indeed, more than a measure, for Bowne is concerned to emphasize that selfhood alone of all things in nature marks off the finite from the infinite. As for the self's freedom it exists not as the negation of necessity but as an expression of the infinite purpose of which necessity itself is a part. None of these refinements is to be found in Rāmānuja. Unhindered by any considerations of causality, he views freedom as something achieved, though the latter idea is present in Bowne, too. The fact is that free will is not a problem in the philosophy of Rāmānuja, certainly not a problem to be solved by reason. The freedom with which he is concerned is not so much freedom of the will as the freedom of consciousness, consciousness which is for him, the very life of the self.

This disposition to set up experience, especially mystical experience, over against reason, is more marked in Rāmānuja than in Bowne. Indeed, mystical experience hardly figures in the philosophy of Bowne. Moreover, his transcendental empiricism rules out such opposition. Reason is itself a part of experience. There are intimations of this idea in Rāmānuja, but his lapses from it are numerous. The intimations as well as lapses are evident in his attitude towards the possibility of proving the existence of God. On the one hand, he insists that the existence of God is evidenced only in and through a certain state of consciousness. God is not a matter of demonstration, or rather the demonstration itself is the state of consciousness. On the other hand, he is not disposed to dispense with reason altogether. If its deliverances are inconclusive with regard to the existence of God, it is yet able to throw light upon His nature.

SOME CRITICAL ISSUES

To the positivist temper of mind, which is today the prevailing temper in philosophy, Rāmānuja and Bowne must appear as hopelessly vague and their metaphysics a farrago of nonsense. But one need not subscribe to the fashionable shibboleths of the moment to see that there is much vague language and confused thinking in both our philosophers.

There is nothing surprising or objectionable in this, certainly no cause for dismissing the possibility of metaphysics altogether. In fact, it may be said of metaphysics, as Emerson said of reason, that "when me you fly, I am the wings." The positivist who decries metaphysics will usually be found with a metaphysical proposition or two. What for example, is the verification principle, if not a metaphysical hypothesis ? And those who devote themselves to linguistic analysis, are they completely innocent ? One need read only Gilbert Ryle's *The Concept of Mind*[13] to convince oneself that they are not.

Neither the metaphysics of Rāmānuja nor that of Bowne is preposterous, but both are fairly open to criticism at certain points. In the previous section we touched upon some of these and we call attention to some crucial issues in what follows.

We begin with Rāmānuja. His philosophy is not easy to criticize, for it depends less on clear cut concepts than on insight and intuition. First, it is difficult to make out precisely what Rāmānuja means by "identity-in-and-through-and-because of difference." The phrase is a translation of the name he gives his philosophy, namely, *Viśiṣtādvaita.* It is thus apparent that the idea is of the first importance for him. What, in the most general way, he means to suggest by it is a type of qualified non-duality. At the same time, as we have seen, Rāmānuja is highly critical of such logical and metaphysical categories as identity, difference, and identity-in-difference, and of the philosophies which stem from them. Hence it appears, since he himself is a proponent of identity-in-difference, that he must be using the phrase in some special sense. But it is extremely difficult to discover what this sense is. It refers no doubt to his conception of self-experience ; it refers also to his particular brand of empiricism. So far as it affects his view of the relation of the finite selves to the infinite self, the situation

13 Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, (New York : Barnes and Noble, 1949).

is this. On the one hand he is not quite prepared to admit that the finite selves are different from the infinite self; on the other hand he is concerned to preserve the distinction between them, and for this purpose he employs the notion of juxtaposition, itself hardly a lucid idea.

According to Rāmānuja's interpreters, he is primarily opposed to two types of identity-in-difference theory, as these bear on the self. According to the first, the self is nothing but Brahman imagined as limited by some extraneous or accidental adjunct; according to the second the self is merely a mode of Brahman, or Brahman as he assumes a finite form. To the first of these theories Rāmānuja's objection is that since it holds that the self is really Brahman (the distinguishing or limitng adjunct beng imaginary) it follows that imperfections of the self are also the imperfections of Brahman. In the same way, the second theory, by reducing Brahman to the dimensions of the finite self, is bound to ascribe to the former the imperfections of the latter. In the one case, identity becomes diversity owing to a misconception; in the other, identity ceases to be identity and becomes a plurality. As against these views, Rāmānuja argues that the whole is a whole of distinguishable parts, though as a whole it differs from its parts. At the same time the whole is in every part, though it does not on that account cease to be one. Yet it is difficult to see how, if the whole is present in every part, it escapes being a plurality. Nor is it any easier to see how, if the whole is distinct from its parts, it can have any relation to its parts.

The infinite self is one. Rāmānuja insists upon that. He also recognizes the existence of multiplicity, indeed, the one is the ground of the many. Yet it cannot be said that Rāmānuja ever satisfactorily explains the relation between the one and the many, the finite and the infinite. In struggling with the problem Rāmānuja tends to sacrifice difference to identity. Not that this is his intention, but identity in the history of philosophy has proved to be a voracious category. Nor does Rāmānuja manage to right the balance between the one and the many by placing the relationship in a

special category, a category called 'inseparability' or *apṛthaksthiti*. For the category is itself in need of explanation, and it receives none. It marks a mystery rather than throws light upon it.

God, the finite selves, and the material world are the chief counters in the philosophy of Rāmānuja and all of them are regarded as indefeasibly real. Now souls and matter are said to be attributes of God. We are left in the dark as to the sense in which they are attributes. Certainly, it is not in a Spinozistic sense, for Rāmānuja speaks as if souls and matter were also substances. But substance is no better defined than attribute. If substance is that which exists in itself and is conceived through itself, how can souls and matter, as Rāmānuja conceives them, be dependent upon God ? And if they are attributes, how can they have, as Rāmānuja supposes, any independence of God ? It hardly helps to say, as Rāmānuja does, that considered in themselves souls and matter are substances, while in relation to God they have to be considered as His powers or inseparable attributes. But the whole point is that if souls and matter are attributes, they cannot be considered in themselves, and if they are substances they cannot be so only relatively. For while there may be degrees of truth, it is difficult to conceive of degrees of substantiality. If we look at the matter from the side of Brahman, another difficulty comes into view. It will be recalled that the selves and matter are regarded by Rāmānuja as constituting the body of Brahman. But along with this, by no means easily grasped conception of Brahman, Rāmānuja maintains the unlimited and autonomous nature of Brahman. Yet it seems clear that if Brahman has a body, he must be limited by it, however subtle that body may be. And what in that case happens to the unity of Brahman ? It is not easy to make sense of all this, shrouded as it is in mystery.

Nor is it easy to make out the exact sense of Rāmānuja's pluralism. When he talks about the relation of the selves to Brahman, it is in terms largely of their inseparability. Yet with regard to the activities of the self, its striving to con-

form with the will of Brahman, he speaks as if the self were independent, capable of free choice. Now if the selves belong to Brahman, either this free choice is illusory, or else Brahman has two wills, one finite, the other infinite, which is to introduce a disunity into the divine nature. True, Rāmānuja holds that the individual selves exist as independent units within Brahman. But the manner of such existence is not explained, at least in terms that are not disruptive of the self-identity of Brahman. Still another difficulty plagues the pluralism of Rāmānuja. If, as he seems to hold, the individuating principle is matter, so that what distinguishes one self from another is its body, it follows that, their bodies apart, there is no real plurality of souls. And since, according to Rāmānuja the souls are engaged in freeing themselves of the encumbrances of matter, it would appear that they are engaged in freeing themselves of their self-identity.

It is by the will of Brahman that all change occurs, though Brahman himself never changes. Other philosophers, of course, have maintained a doctrine of the same sort, but Rāmānuja is faced with a special difficulty. For, as we have seen, Rāmānuja endows Brahman with a body constituted of the selves and matter, and all changes in the world, as indeed the world itself, have Brahman's body as their efficient cause. How then can change occur without change in Brahman himself? The fact is that with regard to this whole problem of change Rāmānuja is singularly unilluminating.

If we were to sum up our criticism of Rāmānuja in a word, it would be that he has failed to explain how, given the absolute unity of God, a plurality of independent selves is conceivable. Yet in all fairness we must add that the problem is of all metaphysical problems the thorniest, and if Rāmānuja has failed to solve it, so likewise have all other philosophers who have grappled with it.

We turn now to our criticism of Bowne. None of the criticisms that may be levelled at Bowne's philosophy is such as seriously to impair the validity of his insight into the per-

sonalistic nature of reality. He is a profoundly serious thinker, devoted to system, but not at the expense of the facts. The temper of his thought is empirical. Absractions are antipathetic to him, and his attention is always focused on the field of life and action rather than on what are to him the barren wastes of formal logic. A metaphysician in the great tradition, Bowne takes all experience for his province, intent on distilling its deepest significance. He is a moralist to the core, but he does not try to deduce the moral life from a theory, but a theory from moral life.[14] If he is concerned to establish the rational character of the world, it is not by overlooking the other aspects of reality, such as feelings, interests, and urges. The result is that Bowne, to a greater degree than most philosophers, avoids the common fallacy of mistaking the part for the whole.

But the excellences of Bowne's system of philosophy need no defence here. That there are also weaknesses in it is certainly no cause for surprise. Among these is Bowne's general assumption that the universe must be rational. We have every sympathy with the assumption, but can it be justified in the wholesale fashion in which Bowne adopts it? Is it not rather a working hypothesis whose justification can never be anything but piecemeal? Reality is rational only to the extent to which we find rationality in it. To go beyond this is to belie the very empiricism which is so marked a feature of Bowne's procedure in general. Either Bowne's principle of intelligibility is a tautology, so that whatever is not rational is simply dismissed as unreal; or else, if taken as a universal principle, it must be as an assumption. And the question arises whether it is a necessary or even reasonable assupmtion. One might admit its reasonableness without conceding its necessity. Wo do not think that Bowne has succeeded altogether in showing its necessity.

Bowne's emphasis upon wholeness is admirable, but

14. E. C. Wilm, *Studies in Philosophy and Theology*, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1922), pp. 19-20.

such emphasis as it bears upon the theory of truth is beset by the danger of scepticism. If nothing is wholly true except the whole truth, human knowledge is condemned to a perpetual partiality. Truth becomes a humanly unattainable ideal. Now Bowne is no sceptic, yet he seems to propose a theory of truth which if pressed very hard leads to sceptical consequences. For entering into that theory, at least as one of its elements, is the notion of coherence. The fact is that Bowne's discussion of the nature of truth suffers from his failure to distinguish clearly between a theory and a criterion of truth. In other words, it is not clear whether he is proposing coherence as the key to the meaning of truth, or whether he is setting up coherence as a criterion of truth. And with regard to this latter there is an ambiguity. It may mean that coherence is an important criterion after an attested body of truth has been acquired. Or it may mean something far more dubious, namely, that coherence is the test of truth in general, and in this sense the coherence criterion is inseparable from the theory that the meaning of truth is coherence. On a sympathetic reading of Bowne, it is doubtless the case that what he has in mind is the coherence criterion in the limited sense in which it is separable from a coherence theory of truth. And what makes this all the more likely is his acceptance of such other criteria as workableness and verifiability, an acceptance which would be impossible if he were pledged to a coherence theory. In any event, it is not easy to follow Bowne's discussion of the problem of truth, plagued as it is by ambiguities. The whole matter constitutes one of the darker places of his philosophy.

Bowne's theory of knowledge is a massive achievement and it is not to belittle that achievement to say that his theory raises as many questions as it answers. And there is one question which we should like particularly to deal with here. It is an old question, though it is also new in the form in which it is posed by Bowne's theory. Bowne holds that the significant thing about thought is that thought is not only a mental event but that it is the apprehension and

report of a truth beyond the mental event. Thinking considered as a process is, like all occurring events, a particular and so likewise are the contents of consciousness. At the same time that our thought may be viewed as mental events, which is to view for what they are, they must be viewed also in their cognitive capacity, and in that capacity they claim to be revelatory of an order which is itself not created but discovered by thought. It is at this point that a difficult problem arises. It is not only the old problem of how a mental event which is private to me can be said to reveal an extra-private reality, but how such an event can reveal, as Bowne maintains the infinite mind or thought. Nor does this exhaust the difficulty, for Bowne argues further that it is of the very nature of finite thought to refer to the infinite. Yet for all Bowne's elaborate reasonings on the matter, we fail to discern just what it is in finite thought which makes this reference to the infinite in the least ineluctable. It can hardly be maintained that either a logical or psychological analysis of thought reveals this transcendent reference. So we must look to metaphysics for its possible justification. And what we find is Bowne's contention that things cannot interact and be independent at the same time, and since they interact, they must be dependent, so that the hypothesis of an all-embracing being on whom they depend becomes a necessity of thought. But is such an hypothesis really unavoidable? Cannot things both interest and be independent in some respects? And does their independence involve us in the sort of hypothesis that Bowne thinks is a necessity of thought? Bowne is acutely aware of the problem, but yet it remains a problem in his philosophy. Nor is the problem advanced any by Bowne's argument that the relation between finite thought and the infinite thought is causal. Indeed, this very argument raises a still further problem. For if this is the relation between the two, how save the autonomy of the finite thinker, an autonomy which Bowne insists upon.

Still another crucial issue in Bowne's philosophy is his conception of purpose. Illuminating as his discussion of the

purposive character of thought is, he yet fails to explain how purpose is involved, as he supposes, in the very life of the mind. Here again, we may ask, is the contention based on logical or psychological grounds? Neither seems to bear Bowne out on this score. Do metaphysical considerations bear him out? The trouble is that purpose is a rather vaguely defined category in Bowne's system. It is mostly a denial of mechanism. But this apart, is it not fair to say that Bowne, in postulating purpose wholesale, so to speak, is going beyond the facts? Is it true that thought cannot be explained without invoking purpose? And if so, how precisely is it not only involved but necessarily involved in thought? And does Bowne justify his view that the laws of thought must be the laws of the universe itself, if knowledge is to have any validity? What is a law? And can we speak of laws of thought, let alone assume that they legislate for the universe. We feel in all this that Bowne is leaving his empiricism far behind, even the empiricism which he calls transcendental.

Is Bowne a dualist in his epistemology? We have referred to him as such, yet the characterization might be objected to on the ground that while he distinguishes between thought as a mental occurrence and thought as a cognitive content, yet as a cognitive content it is, when veridical, one with its object. Whether this is Bowne's actual view is open to doubt. There is a good deal of vagueness in his discussion of the problem, a vagueness that stems from the fact that he provides us with no proper definition of knowledge, declaring that knowledge is *sui generis*, and what is less excusable, he provides us with no adequate discussion of its nature as a relation between subject and object. Except in the absolute mind the thought series and the thing series are distinctly two according to Bowne. Yet the thing series in his view is so largely the work of thought, that the dualism between them, which however much he insists is ineradicable, is in danger of disappearing. Such an amagalmation of thought and thing runs the risk of abolishing knowledge altogether,

certainly of knowledge in the usual sense. Not that Bowne is minded to escape dualism in this way, but he is tempted to soften its asperities, and he does so at the expense of the object. We may appropriately say something at this point concerning Bowne's view of the mind-body relation. Concomitance, he says, is the only interaction there is; and its determining ground must be sought in the plan and agency of the infinite. At the same time he is critical of Leibnizian parallelism, so by concomitance he evidently does not mean parallelism. But then what does he mean? We are at a loss for an answer. Perhaps his conception of the interaction of body and soul is that of occasionalism. Perhaps he is more of an interactionist than either the term occasionalism or parallelism suggests.

One of the crucial distinctions of Bowne's metaphysics is that between phenomenal reality and ontological reality. He is disinclined to use the term noumenon because of its Kantian association with the notion of the unknowable. It is clear that Bowne is using the word reality here in two different, even opposed senses. True, in calling the phenomenal real, he wishes to emphasize the fact that the phenomenal is not merely the illusory. Still, it cannot be real in the sense in which the ontological is real, and it is confusing to call them both real. And this brings us to Bowne's failure to distinguish clearly the senses of such crucial terms as being, reality, existence, and experience. About one thing Bowne is perfectly clear: it is that 'pure being' is incapable of real existence. Being is always something specific. Its distinctive mark consists in some power of action. Yet 'being' in its most general sense, as the first of the metaphysical categories, is defined by him in a way that makes it virtually indistinguishable from pure being. For in this general sense being means only a possible objectivity for thought, and it does not imply any substantiality or identity in the object, certainly no power of action. Is this not a sense of being that comes close to pure being, which Bowne rejects? Be this as it may, Bowne uses the terms being, reality and existence interchangeably.

Whether he is speaking of phenomena or noumena he calls them both real, as we have just seen, and he refers to them also as being and existing. The trouble perhaps lies with the English language which has no terms with the clearly demarcated senses which would express the distinctions Bowne seems to have in mind. In any case, there is no mistaking the fact that for Bowne only active being is ontological.

Of all metaphysical problems the most puzzling perhaps is that of change and identity, and while Bowne's treatment of it exhibits great depth and seriousness, the mystery of permanence in change remains. To Bowne the explanation of change lies in the constant energizing of God's will, just as the explanation of permanence lies in His abiding intelligence. In a word, the clue to the mystery is the Absolute Self. But may we not say that if the Absolute Self experiences change, it cannot be permanent, while if it is permanent, it cannot experience change. Now, to put the dilemma in this barefaced fashion is no doubt to do an injustice to the subtlety of Bowne's position. Yet how precisely do permanence and change come together in the Absolute Self without in the least impinging upon its identity? It may be said that the finite self offers an example. Yet do we not find that so far as our experience goes permanence is always relative. Bowne appeals to memory, but this is a very slender thread on which to hang the momentous thesis which he is anxious to prove. But what permanence and change exist together, and in what sense or manner; it is not easy to see, despite Bowne's extreme care over the problem.

The difficulties of Bowne's solution come to a head in his vascillating treatment of time. It is clear to him that space possesses a merely phenomenal character, but he appears to be uncertain about time. Thus he argues that memory and self-consciousness are necessary conditions for the emergence of time, but he also argues that while memory serves to bring the idea of time into consciousness, memory implies time. Now either the reality of time antedates the

fact of memory or the reality of memory antedates the fact of time If memory implies time, time must be an integral part of the self, and so possess an ontological status Yet Bowne speaks of the phenomenal character of time, of time as being only the subjective appearance of things. On this view time of course cannot be in God. But it must in some sense be in God, if the divine activity, as Bowne insists, is essentially temporal [15]

To the extent that Bowne is ambiguous with regard to the status of time, whether it is merely phenomenal or a metaphysical reality, his treatment of personality as the fundamental principle is weakened and vitiated For, as Professor Brightman has pointed out,

> To be a person is to act and endure, while at the same time experiencing changeless truths in the changing process of consciousness The temporal is just as necessary to the eternal as the eternal is to the temporal Without both we have a mere abstraction, no explanation of experience as a whole [16]

It is doubtful, though, that Bowne could have brought himself to agree with Brightman that the temporal character of the self points to the temporal character of God For one thing, while Bowne emphasizes the activity of the self, it is not at all certain that he places the essence of that activity in time ; for another he is above all anxious to save the immutability of God There are two sides to Bowne, one empirical, the other Eleatic, and he never managed to reconcile the two

Yet this conflict in Bowne, and it is discernible also in Rāmānuja, so far from detracting the value of his philosophy, only enhances its interest and poignancy The

15 On this whole problem, see, J A Franquiz Ventura, *Borden Parker Bowne's Treatment of the Problem of Change and Identity*, (The University of Puerto Rico Bulletin, Series XXX, No 1, Sept 1942)

16 Edgar S Brightman, "A Temporalist View of God', *Journal of Religion*, 4 (Oct 1932), 552 ff

personalism of both men is one of the great and abiding insights in the history of thought. Neither thinker professed to have a key that unlocked all doors. It is the human lot to see through a glass darkly, as both Rāmānuja and Bowne were aware, yet neither wavered in his faith that the image discerned there is of reality itself. In Bowne's words,

> As we think of the infinite past and the infinite to come, it becomes plain that there is much in the Infinite One which we can never hope to understand, but upon which we can only gaze; yet must not all be wrapped in shadow; something must pierce through to the sunlight and the clear blue.[17]

This something that pierces through to the sunlight is, for Rāmānuja as it is for Bowne, the infinite worth of personality.

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17 B P. Bowne, *The Philosophy of Herbert Spencer*, (Hunt and Eaton, New York, 1874), p 77.

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